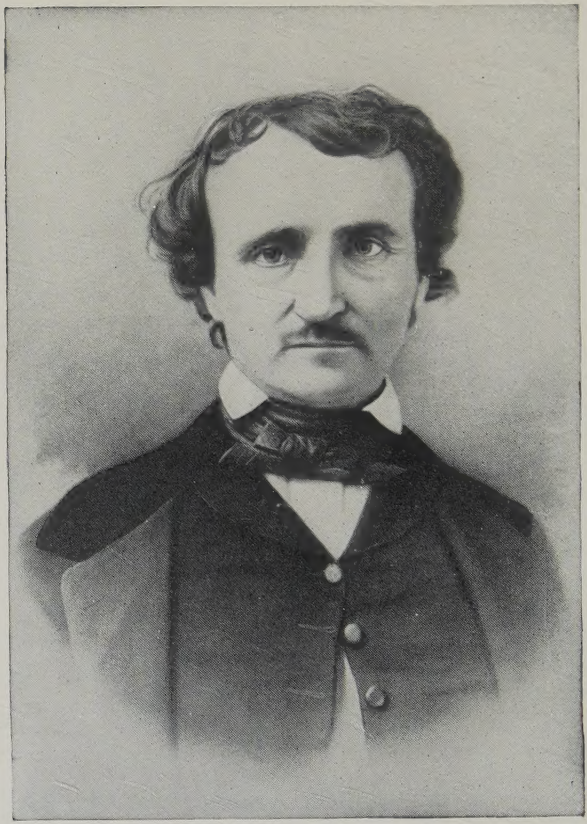
Merrill's English Texts

# SELECTED SHORT STORIES



EDGAR ALLAN POE
From an old daguerreotype

Merrill's English Texts

# SELECTED SHORT STORIES

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
CLAUDE M. FUESS, PH. D., INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH,
PHILLIPS ACADEMY, ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS

NEW YORK
CHARLES E. MERRILL COMPANY

## Merrill's English Texts

This series of books includes in complete editions those masterpieces of English Literature that are best adapted for the use of schools and colleges. The editors of the several volumes are chosen for their special qualifications in connection with the texts issued under their individual supervision, but familiarity with the practical needs of the classroom, no less than sound scholarship, characterizes the editing of every book in the series.

In connection with each text, the editor has provided a critical and historical introduction, including a sketch of the life of the author and his relation to the thought of his time, critical opinions of the work in question chosen from the great body of English criticism, and, where possible, a portrait of the author. Ample explanatory notes of such passages in the text as call for special attention are supplied, but irrelevant annotation and explanations of the obvious are rigidly excluded.

CHARLES E. MERRILL COMPANY

---

Copyright, 1914
by
CHARLES E. MERRILL CO.

# PREFACE

THE aim of this book is to present specimens of the Short Story at its best. A special effort has been made to include the work of English, French, and American masters of the Short Story, and also to illustrate different methods of construction and style. The selections are arranged in approximate chronological order, so that the evolution of the literary type may be traced from the time of Scott to that of Kipling.

Since the collection will almost invariably be used for reading only, and not for detailed study, the Notes have mainly been confined to short biographies of the authors and to compact comment on the stories themselves.

The Introduction is based largely upon the critical investigations of such authorities as Professors Brander Matthews, Henry S. Canby, Charles S. Baldwin, Bliss Perry, and C. Alphonso Smith. Special acknowledgment is due the following publishers for permission to print material copyrighted by them: to Charles Scribner's Sons for Stevenson's *Sire de Malétroit's Door;* to Doubleday, Page and Co. for O. Henry's *A Chaparral Christmas Gift;* to the John Lane Company for Kenneth Grahame's *The Blue Room* from *The Golden Age* (Copyright, 1897, by John Lane); and to Harper and Brothers for Coppée's *The Substitute.*

C. M. F.

ANDOVER, MASS.
*February* 1, 1914.

# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| I. SIR WALTER SCOTT: Wandering Willie's Tale | 15 |
| II. WASHINGTON IRVING: The Devil and Tom Walker | 42 |
| III. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: The Ambitious Guest | 60 |
| IV. EDGAR ALLAN POE: The Cask of Amontillado | 73 |
| V. CHARLES DICKENS: The Signal-Man | 83 |
| VI. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: The Sire de Malétroit's Door | 103 |
| VII. FRANÇOIS COPPÉE: The Substitute | 133 |
| VIII. HENRY CUYLER BUNNER: The Cumbersome Horse | 147 |
| IX. O. HENRY: A Chaparral Christmas Gift | 163 |
| X. GUY DE MAUPASSANT: That Costly Ride | 171 |
| XI. JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE: How Gavin Birse Put it to Mag Lownie | 182 |
| XII. KENNETH GRAHAME: The Blue Room | 190 |
| XIII. RUDYARD KIPLING: Wee Willie Winkie | 202 |
| NOTES | 219 |
| SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING | 244 |
| EXERCISES FOR STUDY AND COMPOSITION | 245 |

# INTRODUCTION

## THE SHORT STORY AS A LITERARY TYPE

Of the generation in which we are now living the Short Story is, I suppose, the most characteristic, as well as the most prevalent, form of literature. The novel, the essay, the lyric, the drama, even the epic, are, it is true, still flourishing around us; but their types, in the case of all but the novel, were perfected before the nineteenth century, and in using them our contemporary authors have a wealth of models to follow. The Short Story, on the contrary, may be claimed as peculiarly a modern product, evolved by some natural law to match the spirit of the age. Many critics indeed maintain, and with much reason, that it is preëminently America's contribution to literature, its brief intensity being singularly well suited to the national temperament.

Narrative of various kinds is as old as primitive man and the crude beginnings of society. We may be sure that the secret of vivid anecdote was discovered even before the *Book of Ruth* or *The Arabian Nights*. Of late years, however, and almost within the memory of men now alive, an elaborate theory of technique has been formulated, undertaking to limit the Short Story as an important and unique branch of fiction and to lay down rules for its composition. Critics have been busy commenting, defining, and legislating until at last a definite standard has been established; and accordingly the Short Story, regarded eighty years ago with condescension and suspicion—as a kind of "by-product of fiction"—has become, since Poe, Stevenson, and Kipling, a significant and worthy literary type. We are now, as Professor

Bliss Perry has pointed out, striving consciously, perhaps too self-consciously, to secure results often attained instinctively by the great tale-tellers of days gone by.

This recent critical discussion, though it has been overdone, has culminated in the outlining of some fundamental principles which, it is generally agreed, ought to govern the organization of any Short Story. Professor Brander Matthews in a memorable essay demonstrated as early as 1884 that "the Short Story differs from the novel essentially, and not merely in the matter of length." Restricted as it is in space, it is evidently bound to portray life, not as a whole, but in phases or sections. It deals commonly with a single incident; it treats of only a small group of characters; it makes ordinarily no change in time, place, or point of view. It should, therefore, possess an absolute unity and produce a clear and total impression. Such perfect examples as Poe's *A Cask of Amontillado* and Stevenson's *Sire de Malétroit's Door* illustrate in what manner this effect of completeness may be achieved. As in a geometric problem, the attention of the reader is directed and held to a single end, and the action is developed steadily, everything irrelevant or discursive being necessarily eliminated. The minor episodes are arranged progressively and guided towards the climax with a care that indicates at once their relative value. No form of literature is more economical; the writer, absorbed in his issue, has little time for dwelling on superfluous details of description or character analysis, but must advance inflexibly to the dramatic moment towards which every word and incident is presumably leading the reader. The moment the narrative drags or halts the impetus is lost. The Short Story is thus as complete in itself as a novel like *David Copperfield;* the difference is one of proportion, selection, and aim.

The field of the Short Story is extraordinarily wide and varied. Life, even in the humblest quarters, is full of striking contrasts and curious coincidences, of chance meetings and unexpected turns of fate. The writer naturally tends to choose the exceptional occurrence and the unusual character; otherwise he finds

it difficult to catch and retain the attention of the public, which, in the Short Story at least, refuses to tolerate the commonplace or the trivial.

It is unquestionable then that the Short Story is to-day recognized as a distinct and definite form of art. And yet there are many reputable narratives of no great length which fail, in some respects, to meet the requirements just laid down as indispensable. Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale*, for instance, has many passages which might have been omitted; yet it has a charm which is irresistibly appealing. It will plainly never do for the critic to make his definition of the Short Story too rigid. Scott will be Scott in defiance of all rules, and people will continue to find his work good.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to make it clear that an able Short Story writer must be endowed with peculiar gifts, often quite unlike those required in a novelist. Thackeray, mainly because of his habit of digression, could never have composed a great Short Story; Miss Alice Brown in our day makes a name as a Short Story writer, but is less successful in more extended narratives. Any master of the Short Story must possess qualities of compression, insight, and originality, and must, in addition, be skilled in craftsmanship of a kind which, in little room, can bring about orderly arrangement. With these should be included the power of stirring readers, of sounding the depths of intense emotion, of reaching the heart of humanity. It is because Poe, Maupassant, and Kipling have met these demands that they have written their names large in the history of the Short Story.

This collection of Short Stories, including specimens of the work of many different authors, English, French, and American, is intended, first of all, to give pleasure, not of an unintelligent sort, but founded on an appreciation of the artistic principles underlying the structure of each tale. The student should learn, not only that a piece of work is excellent, but also why it is noteworthy; he should train himself to observe virtues and defects, to compare, for instance, the opening paragraphs of *Wandering Willie's Tale* and *A Chaparral Christmas Gift* and indicate in

what way O. Henry, in this particular instance, has surpassed Scott. It is primarily in forming good taste that this volume may hope to accomplish its aim.

The future of the Short Story is difficult to forecast. It is undoubtedly at present playing a large, perhaps an excessive, part in the lives of readers of all classes. It has been maintained not infrequently that the Short Story is a kind of tabloid literature, which tends to weaken one's capacity for sustained attention to longer and more important works; and there is an element of justice in this criticism. There is danger, too, that the tremendous number of cheap and vulgar Short Stories constantly appearing in magazines may be harmful to those addicted to their reading. We see all the more reason then why the good should be separated from the bad, why an effort should be made to cultivate a basis of judgment which will enable one to distinguish between the merely melodramatic and the really powerful, between the tinsel and the pure metal. When one has once for all analyzed the difference between good art and bad, he is unlikely deliberately to prefer the sham, especially since, in the Short Story at any rate, good art means commonly an increase of interest.

## WRITING THE SHORT STORY

As models for work in narrative composition, the Short Stories in this volume ought to be highly suggestive. A comparative study of the men here represented and their individual methods should lead to some strong convictions as to the correct procedure in undertaking the actual construction of any such piece of writing. It will be found, in general, that these Short Stories are distinguished by three qualities: originality, either in material or in treatment; unified and coherent structure; and excellence of style. No student should begin creative work of his own without considering with some care these three essentials.

First of all, it is necessary to select material which is fresh and unhackneyed. The main incident need not be melodramatic

or mysterious or improbable, but it must be unusual, tinged with something which removes it from the commonplace routine of life. A long novel may hope to portray in its four hundred or more pages the entire career of any man or woman; but the Short Story is compelled to emphasize one vivid situation and to neglect the rest. The student must guard against choosing a plot which is worn or trite. Scores of school themes each year deal with a series of remarkable occurrences from which the hero suddenly awakes to find it "all a dream;" this particular type of narrative, however rare it may have been in the Stone Age, now excites no thrill in the reader. The best material for a novice is, without doubt, that drawn from his personal observation or experience, especially among people or classes whose life is unconventional. A skillful writer can often deal interestingly with the most ordinary material by recasting it from a new point of view. He seizes upon what others have passed over as insignificant, and lends it attractiveness through the coloring of his personality.

The question of effective structure is, in the Short Story, of immense importance. One fault in untrained narration is the failure to discriminate. To the crude story-teller all events appear to be of equal importance, no one predominating over the others. The first step is to select the vital episode, and to arrange the other incidents in proper relation to it. A good Short Story should treat of one crucial situation, and of only one: the problem for the writer then, as Poe pointed out in 1842, is "to conceive, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be brought out," and to make every detail of the narrative bear upon that climax.

It is undoubtedly a mistake to devote too much space to introductory matter. The best stories aim to grip the reader's attention at the outset, and introduce later any necessary descriptive or explanatory information. Poe's *A Cask of Amontillado*, Dickens's *The Signal-Man*, and O. Henry's *A Chaparral Christmas Gift* illustrate, each in a different way, this method of abrupt opening; while Irving's *The Devil and Tom Walker* and Hawthorne's *The Ambitious Guest* show examples of a more

leisurely type of introduction, justified only by certain individual characteristics of the authors.

Too much care cannot be spent in framing an effective conclusion. The Short Story should reach its climax—and stop. Further comment or elaboration, except in stories of a peculiar class like those having to do with the solution of a mystery, will tend to weaken the complete impression. The sharp endings of Coppée's *The Substitute*, Stevenson's *Sire de Malétroit's Door*, and Maupassant's *That Costly Ride* come at exactly the right moment.

Except in rare cases, nothing should be admitted into the body of the tale which does not contribute essentially to the total effect. "In the whole composition," says Poe, speaking of the Short Story, "there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design." This is doubtless an exaggerated statement; nevertheless it is certain that moralizing, criticism of characters, or analysis of motives may, each for a different reason, impede the progress of the narrative. In a long novel such as *Vanity Fair* or *Tom Jones* the author may feel privileged to interrupt his tale in order to chat at ease with his readers. No such license, however, is allowed the writer of Short Stories.

Last of all is the problem of style. The student should consider carefully the uses of the specific word as developed by authors like Stevenson and Kipling. The graphic, unusual epithet, and the definite phrase are exceedingly desirable in the Short Story because in compact form they produce a clear-cut impression. For much the same reason wordiness ought to be carefully avoided; it wastes space and time without deepening the total effect. A direct, nervous, flexible style, like that of Poe and Stevenson, is probably the most satisfactory for cultivation.

Stevenson, in discussing his own literary methods, has given the following advice to the young fiction-writer:—"Let him choose a motive, whether of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of the motive, and every property employed shall bear to it a near

relation of congruity or contrast; . . . and allow neither himself in the narrative nor any character in the course of the dialogue, to utter one sentence that is not part and parcel of the business of the story." Taken up along these lines, practice in Short Story writing ought to serve definite purposes in stimulating imagination and reflection, in cultivating restraint and the adaptation of means to ends, and in encouraging a correct, energetic, and natural style.

# SELECTED SHORT STORIES

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

### Wandering Willie's Tale

Ye maun have heard of Sir Robert Redgauntlet of that Ilk,[1] who lived in these parts before the dear years. The country will lang mind him; and our fathers used to draw breath thick if ever they heard him named. He was out with the Hielandmen in Montrose's time; and again he was in the hills wi' Glencairn in the saxteen hundred and fifty-twa; and sae when King Charles the Second came in, wha was in sic favour as the Laird of Redgauntlet? He was knighted at Lonon court, wi' the King's ain sword; and being a redhot prelatist, he came down here, rampauging like a lion, with commissions of lieutenancy (and of lunacy, for what I ken), to put down a' the Whigs and Covenanters [2] in the country. Wild wark they made of it; fer the Whigs were as dour [3] as the Cavaliers were fierce, and it was which should first tire the other. Redgauntlet was aye for the strong hand; and his name is kend as wide in the country as Claverhouse's or Tom Dalyell's. Glen, nor dargle, nor mountain, nor cave, could hide the puir hill-folk when Redgauntlet was out

with bugle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been sae mony deer. And troth when they fand them, they didna mak muckle mair ceremony than a Hielandman wi' a roebuck—It was just, "Will ye tak the test?" [1]—if not, "Make ready—present—fire!"—and there lay the recusant.

Far and wide was Sir Robert hated and feared. Men thought he had a direct compact with Satan—that he was proof against steel—and that bullets happed aff his buff-coat like hailstanes from a hearth—that he had a mear that would turn a hare on the side of Carrifragawns [2]—and muckle to the same purpose of whilk [3] mair anon. The best blessing they wared [4] on him was, "Deil scoup [5] wi' Redgauntlet!" He wasna a bad master to his ain folk, though, and was weel aneugh liked by his tenants; and as for the lackeys and troopers that raid out wi' him to the persecutions, as the Whigs caa'd those killing times, they wad hae drunken themsells blind to his health at ony time.

Now you are to ken that my gudesire lived on Redgauntlet's grund—they ca' the place Primrose-Knowe. We had lived on the grund, and under the Redgauntlets, since the riding days,[6] and lang before. It was a pleasant bit; and I think the air is callerer [7] and fresher there than onywhere else in the country. It's a' deserted now; and I sat on the broken door-cheek three days since, and was glad I couldna see the plight the place was in; but that's a' wide o' the mark. There dwelt my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, a rambling, rattling chiel' he had been in his young days, and could play

weel on the pipes; he was famous at "Hoopers and Girders"—a' Cumberland couldna touch him at "Jockie Lattin"—and he had the finest finger for the backlilt between Berwick and Carlisle. The like o' Steenie wasna the sort they made Whigs o'. And so he became a Tory, as they ca' it, which we now ca' Jacobites, just out of a kind of needcessity, that he might belang to some side or other. He had nae ill-will to the Whig bodies, and liked little to see the blude rin, though, being obliged to follow Sir Robert in hunting and hosting,[1] watching and warding, he saw muckle mischief, and maybe did some, that he couldna avoid.

Now Steenie was a kind of favourite with his master, nd kend a' the folks about the castle, and was often ent for to play the pipes when they were at their nerriment. Auld Dougal MacCallum, the butler, hat had followed Sir Robert through gude and ill, thick and thin, pool and stream, was specially fond of the pipes, and aye gae my gudesire his gude word wi' the Laird; for Dougal could turn his master round his finger.

Weel, round came the Revolution,[2] and it had like to have broken the hearts baith of Dougal and his master. But the change was not a'thegether sae great as they feared, and other folk thought for. The Whigs made an unca [3] crawing what they would do with their auld enemies, and in special wi' Sir Robert Redgauntlet. But there were ower mony great folks dipped in the same doings, to mak a spick and span new warld. So

Parliament passed it a' ower easy; and Sir Robert, bating [1] that he was held to hunting foxes instead of Covenanters, remained just the man he was. His revel was as loud, and his hall as weel lighted, as ever it had been, though maybe he lacked the fines of the non-conformists, that used to come to stock his larder and cellar; for it is certain he began to be keener about the rents than his tenants used to find him before, and they behoved to be prompt to the rent-day, or else the Laird wasna pleased. And he was sic an awsome body, that naebody cared to anger him; for the oaths he swore, and the rage that he used to get into, and the looks that he put on, made men sometimes think him a devil incarnate.

Weel, my gudesire was nae manager—no that he was a very great misguider—but he hadna the saving gift, and he got twa terms' rent in arrear. He got the first brash [2] at Whitsunday put ower wi' fair word and piping—but when Martinmas came, there was a summons from the grund officer to come wi' the rent on a day preceese, or else Steenie behoved to flit. Sair wark he had to get the siller; but he was weel-friended, and at last he got the haill scraped thegether—a thousand merks—the maist of it was from a neighbour they caa'd Laurie Lapraik—a sly tod. Laurie had walth o' gear [3]—could hunt wi' the hound and rin wi' the hare—and be Whig or Tory, saunt or sinner, as the wind stood. He was a professor [4] in this Revolution warld, but he liked an orra sough [5] of this warld, and a tune on the pipes weel aneugh at a bytime; and abune

a', he thought he had gude security for the siller he lent my gudesire ower the stocking at Primrose-Knowe.

Away trots my gudesire to Redgauntlet Castle wi' a heavy purse and a light heart, glad to be out of the Laird's danger. Weel, the first thing he learned at the Castle was, that Sir Robert had fretted himsell into a fit of the gout, because he did not appear before twelve o'clock. It wasna a'thegether for sake of the money, Dougal thought; but because he didna like to part wi' my gudesire aff the grund. Dougal was glad to see Steenie, and brought him into the great oak parlour, and there sat the Laird his leesome lane,[1] excepting that he had beside him a great, ill-favoured jackanape, that was a special pet of his; a cankered beast it was, and mony an ill-natured trick it played—ill to please it was, and easily angered—ran about the haill castle, chattering and yowling, and pinching, and biting folk, specially before ill-weather, or disturbances in the state. Sir Robert caa'd it Major Weir, after the warlock [2] that was burnt; and few folk liked either the name or the conditions of the creature—they thought there was something in it by ordinar—and my gudesire was not just easy in mind when the door shut on him, and he saw himself in the room wi' naebody but the Laird, Dougal MacCallum, and the Major, a thing that hadna chanced to him before.

Sir Robert sat, or, I should say, lay, in a great armed chair, wi' his grand velvet gown, and his feet on a cradle; for he had baith gout and gravel, and his face looked as gash [3] and ghastly as Satan's. Major Weir

sat opposite to him, in a red laced coat, and the Laird's wig on his head; and aye as Sir Robert girned [1] wi' pain, the jackanape girned too, like a sheep's-head between a pair of tangs—an ill-faur'd, fearsome couple they were. The Laird's buff-coat was hung on a pin behind him, and his broadsword and his pistols within reach; for he keepit up the auld fashion of having the weapons ready, and a horse saddled day and night, just as he used to do when he was able to loup on horseback, and away after ony of the hill-folk he could get speerings of. Some said it was for fear of the Whigs taking vengeance, but I judge it was just his auld custom—he wasna gien to fear ony thing. The rental-book, wi' its black cover and brass clasps, was lying beside him; and a book of sculduddry sangs[2] was put betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the Goodman of Primrose-Knowe, as behind the hand with his mails and duties. Sir Robert gave my gudesire a look, as if he would have withered his heart in his bosom. Ye maun ken he had a way of bending his brows, that men saw the visible mark of a horse-shoe in his forehead, deep-dinted, as if it had been stamped there.

"Are ye come light-handed, ye son of a toom [3] whistle?" said Sir Robert. "Zounds! if you are——"

My gudesire, with as gude a countenance as he could put on, made a leg, and placed the bag of money on the table wi' a dash, like a man that does something clever. The Laird drew it to him hastily—"Is it all here, Steenie, man?"

"Your honour will find it right," said my gudesire.

"Here, Dougal," said the Laird, "gie Steenie a tass of brandy down stairs, till I count the siller and write the receipt."

But they werena weel out of the room, when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garr'd [1] the Castle rock. Back ran Dougal—in flew the livery-men—yell on yell gied the Laird, ilk [2] ane mair awfu' than the ither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun hirdy-girdy—naebody to say "come in," or "gae out." Terribly the Laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat; and Hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was aye the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plunged his swoln feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning; and folk say that it *did* bubble and sparkle like a seething caldron. He flung the cup at Dougal's head, and said he had given him blood instead of Burgundy; and, sure aneugh, the lass washed clotted blood aff the carpet the neist day. The jack-anape they caa'd Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master; my gudesire's head was like to turn—he forgot baith siller and receipt, and down stairs he banged; but as he ran, the shrieks came faint and fainter; there was a deep-drawn shivering groan, and word gaed through the Castle that the Laird was dead.

Weel, away came my gudesire, wi' his finger in his mouth, and his best hope was, that Dougal had seen

the money-bag and heard the Laird speak of writing the receipt. The young Laird, now Sir John, came from Edinburgh, to see things put to rights. Sir John and his father never gree'd weel. Sir John had been bred an advocate, and afterwards sat in the last Scots Parliament and voted for the Union,[1] having gotten, it was thought, a rug of the compensations—if his father could have come out of his grave, he would have brained him for it on his awn hearthstane. Some thought it was easier counting with the auld rough Knight than the fair-spoken young ane—but mair of that anon.

Dougal MacCallum, poor body, neither grat nor graned, but gaed about the house looking like a corpse, but directing, as was his duty, a' the order of the grand funeral. Now, Dougal looked aye waur and waur when night was coming, and was aye the last to gang to his bed, whilk was in a little round just opposite the chamber of dais, whilk his master occupied while he was living, and where he now lay in state, as they caa'd it, weel-a-day! The night before the funeral, Dougal could keep his awn counsel nae langer; he came doun with his proud spirit, and fairly asked old Hutcheon to sit in his room with him for an hour. When they were in the round, Dougal took ae [2] tass of brandy to himsell, and gave another to Hutcheon, and wished him all health and lang life, and said that for himself, he wasna lang for this world; for that, every night since Sir Robert's death, his silver call had sounded from the state chamber, just as it used to do at nights in his

lifetime to call Dougal to help to turn him in his bed. Dougal said, that being alone with the dead on that floor of the tower (for naebody cared to wake Sir Robert Redgauntlet like another corpse), he had never daured to answer the call, but that now his conscience checked him for neglecting his duty; for, "though death breaks service," said MacCallum, "it shall never break my service to Sir Robert; and I will answer his next whistle, so be you will stand by me, Hutcheon."

Hutcheon had nae will to the wark, but he had stood by Dougal in battle and broil, and he wad not fail him at this pinch; so down the carles [1] sat ower a stoup of brandy, and Hutcheon, who was something of a clerk, would have read a chapter of the Bible; but Dougal would hear naething but a blaud of Davie Lindsay,[2] whilk was the waur preparation.

When midnight came, and the house was quiet as the grave, sure enough the silver whistle sounded as sharp and shrill as if Sir Robert was blowing it, and up got the twa auld serving-men, and tottered into the room where the dead man lay. Hutcheon saw aneugh at the first glance; for there were torches in the room, which shewed him the foul fiend, in his ain shape, sitting on the Laird's coffin! Ower he couped as if he had been dead. He could not tell how lang he lay in a trance at the door, but when he gathered himself, he cried on his neighbour, and getting nae answer, raised the house, when Dougal was found lying dead within twa steps of the bed where his master's coffin was placed. As for the whistle, it was gane anes and aye; [3]

but mony a time was it heard at the top of the house on the bartizan, amang the auld chimneys and turrets, where the howlets have their nests. Sir John hushed the matter up, and the funeral passed over without mair bogle-wark.[1]

But when a' was ower, and the Laird was beginning to settle his affairs, every tenant was called up for his arrears, and my gudesire for the full sum that stood against him in the rental book. Weel, away he trots to the Castle to tell his story, and there he is introduced to Sir John, sitting in his father's chair, in deep mourning, with weepers and hanging cravat, and a small walking rapier by his side, instead of the auld broadsword that had a hundred-weight of steel about it, what with blade, chape, and basket-hilt. I have heard their communings so often tauld ower, that I almost think I was there mysell, though I couldna be born at the time.

"I wuss ye joy, sir, of the head seat, and the white loaf, and the braid lairdship. Your father was a kind man to friends and followers; muckle grace to you, Sir John, to fill his shoon—his boots, I suld say, for he seldom wore shoon, unless it were muils when he had the gout."

"Ay, Steenie," quoth the Laird, sighing deeply, and putting his napkin to his een, "his was a sudden call, and he will be missed in the country; no time to set his house in order—weel prepared Godward, no doubt, which is the root of the matter—but left us behind a tangled hesp[2] to wind, Steenie.—Hem! hem! We

maun go to business, Steenie; much to do, and little time to do it in."

Here he opened the fatal volume. I have heard of a thing they call Doomsday-book—I am clear it has been a rental of back-ganging tenants.

"Stephen," said Sir John, still in the same soft, sleekit tone of voice—"Stephen Stevenson, or Steenson, ye are down here for a year's rent behind the hand—due at last term."

*Stephen.* "Please your honour, Sir John, I paid it to your father."

*Sir John.* "Ye took a receipt, then, doubtless, Stephen; and can produce it?"

*Stephen.* "Indeed, I hadna time, an it like your honour; for nae sooner had I set doun the siller, and just as his honour, Sir Robert, that's gaen, drew it till him to count it, and write out the receipt, he was ta'en wi' the pains that removed him."

"That was unlucky," said Sir John, after a pause. "But ye maybe paid it in the presence of somebody. I want but a *talis qualis* [1] evidence, Stephen. I would go ower strictly to work with no poor man."

*Stephen.* "Troth, Sir John, there was naebody in the room but Dougal MacCallum the butler. But, as your honour kens, he has e'en followed his auld master."

"Very unlucky again, Stephen," said Sir John, without altering his voice a single note. "The man to whom ye paid the money is dead—and the man who witnessed the payment is dead too—and the siller which should have been to the fore, is neither seen nor

heard tell of in the repositories. How am I to believe a' this?"

*Stephen.* "I dinna ken, your honour; but there is a bit memorandum note of the very coins; for, God help me! I had to borrow out of twenty purses; and I am sure that ilka man there set down will take his grit oath for what purpose I borrowed the money."

*Sir John.* "I have little doubt ye *borrowed* the money, Steenie. It is the *payment* to my father that I want to have some proof of."

*Stephen.* "The siller maun be about the house, Sir John. And since your honour never got it, and his honour that was canna have taen it wi' him, maybe some of the family may have seen it."

*Sir John.* "We will examine the servants, Stephen; that is but reasonable."

But lackey and lass, and page and groom, all denied stoutly that they had ever seen such a bag of money as my gudesire described. What was waur, he had unluckily not mentioned to any living soul of them his purpose of paying his rent. Ae quean had noticed something under his arm, but she took it for the pipes.

Sir John Redgauntlet ordered the servants out of the room, and then said to my gudesire, "Now, Steenie, ye see ye have fair play; and, as I have little doubt ye ken better where to find the siller than ony other body, I beg, in fair terms, and for your own sake, that you will end this fasherie; for, Stephen, ye maun pay or flit."

"The Lord forgie your opinion," said Stephen, driven almost to his wit's end—"I am an honest man."

"So am I, Stephen," said his honour, "and so are all the folks in the house, I hope. But if there be a knave amongst us, it must be he that tells the story he cannot prove." He paused, and then added, mair sternly, "If I understand your trick, sir, you want to take advantage of some malicious reports concerning things in this family, and particularly respecting my father's sudden death, thereby to cheat me out of the money, and perhaps take away my character, by insinuating that I have received the rent I am demanding.—Where do you suppose this money to be? I insist upon knowing."

My gudesire saw everything look so muckle against him, that he grew nearly desperate—however, he shifted from one foot to another, looked to every corner of the room, and made no answer.

"Speak out, sirrah," said the Laird, assuming a look of his father's, a very particular ane, which he had when he was angry—it seemed as if the wrinkles of his frown made that self-same fearful shape of a horse's shoe in the middle of his brow; "Speak out, sir! I *will* know your thoughts; do you suppose that I have this money?"

"Far be it frae me to say so," said Stephen.

"Do you charge any of my people with having taken it?"

"I wad be laith to charge them that may be inno-

cent," said my gudesire; "and if there be any one that is guilty, I have nae proof."

"Somewhere the money must be, if there is a word of truth in your story," said Sir John; "I ask where you think it is—and demand a correct answer."

"In hell, if you *will* have my thoughts of it," said my gudesire, driven to extremity,—"in hell, with your father, his jackanape, and his silver whistle."

Down the stairs he ran (for the parlour was nae place for him after such a word), and he heard the Laird swearing blood and wounds behind him, as fast as ever did Sir Robert, and roaring for the bailie and the baron-officer.

Away rode my gudesire to his chief creditor (him they caa'd Laurie Lapraik), to try if he could make ony thing out of him; but when he tauld his story, he got but the warst word in his wame—thief, beggar, and dyvour,[1] were the saftest terms; and to the boot of these hard terms, Laurie brought up the auld story of his dipping his hand in the blood of God's saunts, just as if a tenant could have helped riding with the Laird, and that a laird like Sir Robert Redgauntlet. My gudesire was, by this time, far beyond the bounds of patience, and, while he and Laurie were at deil speed the liars, he was wanchancie [2] aneugh to abuse Lapraik's doctrine as weel as the man, and said things that garr'd folks' flesh grue that heard them;—he wasna just himsell, and he had lived wi' a wild set in his day.

At last they parted, and my gudesire was to ride hame through the wood of Pitmurkie, that is a' fou of

black firs, as they say.—I ken the wood, but the firs may be black or white for what I can tell.—At the entry of the wood there is a wild common, and on the edge of the common, a little lonely change-house, that was keepit then by an ostler wife, they suld hae caa'd her Tibbie Faw, and there puir Steenie cried for a mutchkin of brandy, for he had had no refreshment the haill day. Tibbie was earnest wi' him to take a bite of meat, but he couldna think o't, nor would he take his foot out of the stirrup, and took off the brandy wholely at twa draughts, and named a toast at each:—the first was, the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and might he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-tenant; and the second was, a health to Man's Enemy, if he would but get him back the pock of siller, or tell him what came o't, for he saw the haill world was like to regard him as a thief and a cheat, and he took that waur than even the ruin of his house and hauld.

On he rode, little caring where. It was a dark night turned, and the trees made it yet darker, and he let the beast take its ain way through the wood; when all of a sudden, from tired and wearied that it was before, the nag began to spring, and flee, and stend, that my gudesire could hardly keep the saddle.—Upon the whilk, a horseman, suddenly riding up beside him, said, "That's a mettle beast of yours, freend; will you sell him?" So saying, he touched the horse's neck with his riding-wand, and it fell into its auld heigh-ho of a stumbling trot. "But the spunk's soon out of him I

think," continued the stranger, "and that is like mony a man's courage, that thinks he wad do great things till he come to the proof."

My gudesire scarce listened to this, but spurred his horse, with "Gude e'en to you, freend."

But it's like the stranger was ane that doesna lightly yield his point; for, ride as Steenie liked, he was aye beside him at the self-same pace. At last, my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, grew half angry; and, to say the truth, half feared.

"What is it that ye want with me, freend?" he said. "If ye be a robber, I have nae money; if ye be a leal man, wanting company, I have nae heart to mirth or speaking; and if ye want to ken the road, I scarce ken it mysell."

"If you will tell me your grief," said the stranger, "I am one that, though I have been sair miscaa'd in the world, am the only hand for helping my freends."

So my gudesire, to ease his ain heart, mair than from any hope of help, told him the story from beginning to end.

"It's a hard pinch," said the stranger; "but I think I can help you."

"If you could lend the money, sir, and take a lang day—I ken nae other help on earth," said my gudesire.

"But there may be some under the earth," said the stranger. "Come, I'll be frank wi' you; I could lend you the money on bond, but you would maybe scruple my terms. Now, I can tell you, that your auld Laird is disturbed in his grave by your curses, and the wailing

of your family, and if ye daur venture to go to see him, he will give you the receipt."

My gudesire's hair stood on end at this proposal, but he thought his companion might be some humoursome chield that was trying to frighten him, and might end with lending him the money. Besides, he was bauld wi' brandy, and desperate wi' distress; and he said he had courage to go to the gate of hell, and a step farther for that receipt.—The stranger laughed.

Weel, they rode on through the thickest of the wood, when, all of a sudden, the horse stopped at the door of a great house; and, but that he knew the place was ten miles off, my father would have thought he was at Redgauntlet Castle. They rode into the outer court-yard, through the muckle faulding yetts, and aneath the auld portcullis; and the whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons. They lap off, and my gudesire, as seemed to him, fastened his horse to the very ring he had tied him to that morning, when he gaed to wait on the young Sir John.

"God!" said my gudesire, "if Sir Robert's death be but a dream."

He knocked at the ha' door just as he was wont, and his auld acquaintance, Dougal MacCallum—just after his wont, too,—came to open the door, and said, "Piper Steenie, are ye there, lad? Sir Robert has been crying for you."

My gudesire was like a man in a dream—he looked

for the stranger, but he was gane for the time. At last he just tried to say, "Ha! Dougal Driveower, are ye living? I thought ye had been dead."

"Never fash yoursell wi' me," said Dougal, "but look to yoursell; and see ye tak naething frae onybody here, neither meat, drink, or siller, except just the receipt that is your ain."

So saying, he led the way out through halls and trances that were weel kend to my gudesire, and into the auld oak parlour; and there was as much singing of profane sangs, and birling [1] of red wine, and speaking blasphemy and sculduddry, as had ever been in Redgauntlet Castle when it was at the blithest.

But, Lord take us in keeping! what a set of ghastly revellers they were that sat round that table!—My gudesire kend mony that had long before gane to their place, for often had he piped to the most part in the hall of Redgauntlet. There was the fierce Middleton,[2] and the dissolute Rothes, and the crafty Lauderdale; and Dalyell, with his bald head and a beard to his girdle; and Earlshall, with Cameron's blude on his hand; and wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr. Cargill's limbs till the blude sprung; and Dunbarton Douglas, the twice-turned traitor baith to country and king. There was the Bluidy Advocate MacKenyie, who, for his worldly wit and wisdom, had been to the rest as a god. And there was Claverhouse, as beautiful as when he lived, with his long, dark, curled locks, streaming down over his laced buff-coat, and his left hand always on his right spule-blade, to hide the wound that the silver

bullet had made. He sat apart from them all, and looked at them with a melancholy, haughty countenance; while the rest hallooed, and sung, and laughed, that the room rang. But their smiles were fearfully contorted from time to time; and their laugh passed into such wild sounds, as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his banes.

They that waited at the table were just the wicked serving-men and troopers, that had done their work and cruel bidding on earth. There was the Lang Lad of the Nethertown, that helped to take Argyle; and the Bishop's summoner, that they called the Deil's Rattle-bag; and the wicked guardsmen, in their laced coats; and the savage Highland Amorites, that shed blood like water; and many a proud serving-man, haughty of heart and bloody of hand, cringing to the rich, and making them wickeder than they would be; grinding the poor to powder, when the rich had broken them to fragments. And mony, mony mair were coming and ganging, a' as busy in their vocation as if they had been alive.

Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in the midst of a' this fearful riot, cried, wi' a voice like thunder, on Steenie Piper, to come to the boardhead where he was sitting; his legs stretched out before him, and swathed up with flannel, with his holster pistols aside him, while the great broadsword rested against his chair, just as my gudesire had seen him the last time on earth—the very cushion for the jackanape was close to him, but the creature itsell was not there—it wasna its hour, it's

likely; for he heard them say as he came forward, "Is not the Major come yet?" And another answered, "The jackanape will be here betimes the morn." And when my gudesire came forward, Sir Robert, or his ghaist, or the deevil in his likeness, said, "Weel, Piper, hae ye settled wi' my son for the year's rent?"

With much ado, my father gat breath to say, that Sir John would not settle without his honour's receipt.

"Ye shall hae that for a tune of the pipes, Steenie," said the appearance of Sir Robert—"Play us up 'Weel hoddled, Luckie.'"

Now this was a tune my gudesire learned frae a warlock, that heard it when they were worshipping Satan at their meetings; and my gudesire had sometimes played it at the ranting suppers in Redgauntlet Castle, but never very willingly; and he now grew cauld at the very name of it, and said, for excuse, he hadna his pipes wi' him.

"MacCallum, ye limb of Beelzebub," said the fearfu' Sir Robert, "bring Steenie the pipes that I am keeping for him!"

MacCallum brought a pair of pipes might have served the piper of Donald of the Isles. But he gave my gudesire a nudge as he offered them; and looking secretly and closely, Steenie saw that the chanter was of steel, and heated to a white heat; so he had fair warning not to trust his fingers with it. So he excused himself again, and said he was faint and frightened, and had not wind aneugh to fill the bag.

"Then ye maun eat and drink, Steenie," said the figure; "for we do little else here; and it's ill speaking between a fou man and a fasting."

Now these were the very words that the bloody Earl of Douglas said to keep the King's messenger in hand, while he cut off the head of MacLellan of Bombie, at the Threave Castle; and that put Steenie mair and mair on his guard. So he spoke up like a man, and said he came neither to eat, or drink, or make minstrelsy; but simply for his ain—to ken what was come of the money he had paid, and to get a discharge for it; and he was so stout-hearted by this time, that he charged Sir Robert for conscience' sake—(he had no power to say the holy name)—and as he hoped for peace and rest, to spread no snares for him, but just to give him his ain.

The appearance gnashed its teeth and laughed, but it took from a large pocket-book the receipt, and handed it to Steenie. "There is your receipt, ye pitiful cur: and for the money, my dog-whelp of a son may go look for it in the Cat's Cradle."

My gudesire uttered mony thanks, and was about to retire, when Sir Robert roared aloud, "Stop though, I am not done with thee. HERE we do nothing for nothing; and you must return on this very day twelve month, to pay your master the homage that you owe me for my protection."

My father's tongue was loosed of a suddenty, and he said aloud, "I refer mysell to God's pleasure, and not to yours."

He had no sooner uttered the word than all was

dark around him; and he sunk on the earth with such a sudden shock, that he lost both breath and sense.

How lang Steenie lay there, he could not tell; but when he came to himsell, he was lying in the auld kirkyard of Redgauntlet parochine, just at the door of the family aisle, and the scutcheon of the auld knight, Sir Robert, hanging over his head. There was a deep morning fog on grass and gravestane around him, and his horse was feeding quietly beside the minister's twa cows. Steenie would have thought the whole was a dream, but he had the receipt in his hand, fairly written and signed by the auld Laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain.

Sorely troubled in his mind, he left that dreary place, rode through the mist to Redgauntlet Castle, and with much ado he got speech of the Laird.

"Well, you dyvour bankrupt," was the first word, "have you brought me my rent?"

"No," answered my gudesire, "I have not; but I have brought your honour Sir Robert's receipt for it."

"How, sirrah?—Sir Robert's receipt!—You told me he had not given you one."

"Will your honour please to see if that bit line is right?"

Sir John looked at every line, and at every letter, with much attention; and at last, at the date, which my gudesire had not observed,—"*From my appointed place,*" he read, "*this twenty-fifth of November.*"—

"What!—That is yesterday!—Villain, thou must have gone to hell for this!"

"I got it from your honour's father—whether he be in heaven or hell, I know not," said Steenie.

"I will delate you for a warlock to the Privy Council!" said Sir John. "I will send you to your master, the devil, with the help of a tar-barrel and a torch!"

"I intend to delate mysell to the Presbytery," said Steenie, "and tell them all I have seen last night, whilk are things fitter for them to judge of than a borrel man like me."

Sir John paused, composed himsell, and desired to hear the full history; and my gudesire told it him from point to point, as I have told it you—word for word, neither more nor less.

Sir John was silent again for a long time, and at last he said, very composedly, "Steenie, this story of yours concerns the honour of many a noble family besides mine; and if it be a leasing-making, to keep yourself out of my danger, the least you can expect is to have a redhot iron driven through your tongue, and that will be as bad as scauding your fingers wi' a redhot chanter. But yet it may be true, Steenie; and if the money cast up, I shall not know what to think of it.—But where shall we find the Cat's Cradle? There are cats enough about the old house, but I think they kitten without the ceremony of bed or cradle."

"We were best ask Hutcheon," said my gudesire; "he kens a' the odd corners about as weel as—another

serving-man that is now gane, and that I wad not like to name."

Aweel, Hutcheon, when he was asked, told them that a ruinous turret, lang disused, next to the clock-house, only accessible by a ladder, for the opening was on the outside, and far above the battlements, was called of old the Cat's Cradle.

"There will I go immediately," said Sir John, and he took (with what purpose, Heaven kens) one of his father's pistols from the hall-table, where they had lain since the night he died, and hastened to the battlements.

It was a dangerous place to climb, for the ladder was auld and frail, and wanted ane or twa rounds. However, up got Sir John, and entered at the turret door, where his body stopped the only little light that was in the bit turret. Something flees at him wi' a vengeance, maist dang him back ower—bang gaed the knight's pistol, and Hutcheon, that held the ladder, and my gudesire that stood beside him, hears a loud skelloch.[1] A minute after, Sir John flings the body of the jackanape down to them, and cried that the siller is fund, and that they should come up and help him. And there was the bag of siller sure aneugh, and mony orra things besides, that had been missing for mony a day. And Sir John, when he had riped [2] the turret weel, led my gudesire into the dining-parlour, and took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, and said he was sorry he should have doubted his word, and that we would hereafter be a good master to him, to make amends.

"And now, Steenie," said Sir John, "although this vision of yours tends, on the whole, to my father's credit, as an honest man, that he should, even after his death, desire to see justice done to a poor man like you, yet you are sensible that ill-dispositioned men might make bad constructions upon it, concerning his soul's health. So, I think, we had better lay the haill dirdum [1] on that ill-deedie creature, Major Weir, and say naething about your dream in the wood of Pitmurkie. You had taken ower muckle brandy to be very certain about onything; and Steenie, this receipt" (his hand shook while he held it out),—"it's but a queer kind of document, and we will do best, I think, to put it quietly in the fire."

"Od, but for as queer as it is, it's a' the voucher I have for my rent," said my gudesire, who was afraid, it may be, of losing the benefit of Sir Robert's discharge.

"I will bear the contents to your credit in the rental-book, and give you a discharge under my own hand," said Sir John, "and that on the spot. And, Steenie, if you can hold your tongue about this matter, you shall sit, from this term downward, at an easier rent."

"Mony thanks to your honour," said Steenie, who saw easily in what corner the wind was; "doubtless I will be conformable to all your honour's commands; only I would willingly speak wi' some powerful minister on the subject, for I do not like the sort of soumons of appointment whilk your honour's father"——

"Do not call the phantom my father!" said Sir John, interrupting him.

"Weel, then, the thing that was so like him,"—said my gudesire; "he spoke of my coming back to him this time twelvemonth, and it's a weight on my conscience."

"Aweel, then," said Sir John, "if you be so much distressed in mind, you may speak to our minister of the parish; he is a douce man, regards the honour of our family, and the mair that he may look for some patronage from me."

Wi' that, my father readily agreed that the receipt should be burnt, and the Laird threw it into the chimney with his ain hand. Burn it would not for them, though; but away it flew up the lum, wi' a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib.

My grandsire gaed down to the Manse, and the minister, when he had heard the story, said, it was his real opinion, that though my gudesire had gaen very far in tampering with dangerous matters, yet, as he had refused the devil's arles (for such was the offer of meat and drink), and had refused to do homage by piping at his bidding, he hoped, that if he held a circumspect walk hereafter, Satan could take little advantage by what was come and gane. And, indeed, my gudesire, of his ain accord, lang forswore baith the pipes and the brandy—it was not even till the year was out, and the fatal day passed, that he would so much as take the fiddle, or drink usquebaugh or tippenny.

Sir John made up his story about the jackanape as he liked himsell; and some believe till this day there was no more in the matter than the filching nature of

the brute. Indeed, ye'll no hinder some to threap,[1] that it was nane o' the Auld Enemy that Dougal and my gudesire saw in the Laird's room, but only that wanchancy creature, the Major, capering on the coffin; and that, as to the blawing on the Laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the Laird himsell, if no better. But Heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife, after Sir John and her ain gudeman were baith in the moulds. And then my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs, but not in his judgment or memory—at least nothing to speak of—was obliged to tell the real narrative to his friends, for the credit of his good name. He might else have been charged for a warlock.

## WASHINGTON IRVING

### The Devil and Tom Walker

A few miles from Boston, in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly, and at night, to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never returned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earth-

quakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meagre, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself; they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin-trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveler stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field, where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding-stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrank within himself at the horrid clamor and clapper-clawing; eyed

the den of discord askance; and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a short cut homeward, through the swamp. Like most short-cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great, gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noonday and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveler into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bull-frog, and the water-snake, where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half-drowned, half-rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treacherous forest, stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs, or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees, startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck, rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a firm piece of ground, which ran like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable,

and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Any one but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the times of the Indian wars, when it was asserted that the savages held incantations there and made sacrifices to the Evil Spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree-toad, and delving with his walking-stick into the mound of black mould at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mould, and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this death-blow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen any one approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in a rude half Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-color, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an axe on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse, growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom, with a sneer; "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be damned," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was

scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked around, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the axe. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild 'huntsman' in some countries; the 'black miner' in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the 'black woodsman.' I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists; I am the great

patron and prompter of slave-dealers and the grand-master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half-civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story; though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage in this wild, lonely place would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great stores of money buried by Kidd the pirate under the oak-trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may be easily surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view. When they

had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused. "What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There's my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home he found the black print of a finger burned, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate.

The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers, with the usual flourish, that "A great man had fallen in Israel."

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom; "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many

and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject; but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and, if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort towards the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms; she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she set off again for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance; morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came; but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that

she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an axe on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a check apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by; or the bull-frog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up and beheld a bundle tied in a check apron and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch on it. He leaped with joy, for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables.

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly, to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its

wide wings and sailed off, screaming, into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the checked apron, but, woeful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to this most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodsman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the signs of fierce clapper-clawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude toward the black woodsman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old black-legs played shy, for, whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for the calling; he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's

eagerness to the quick and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodsman's dress, with an axe on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's addresses with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave-ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused; he was bad enough in all conscience, but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave-trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it to-morrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchants to bankruptcy—"

"I'll drive them to the devil," cried Tom Walker.

"*You* are the usurer for my money!" said black-legs with delight. "When will you want the rhino?" [1]

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker. So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a counting-house in Boston.

His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher,[2] when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills; the famous Land Bank had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements, for building cities in the wilderness; land-jobbers went about with maps of grants and townships and Eldorados, lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country had raged to an alarming degree and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual, the fever had subsided,

the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged with customers. The needy and adventurous, the gambling speculator, the dreaming land-jobber, the thriftless tradesman, the merchant with cracked credit—in short, every one driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend to the needy, and acted like "a friend in need;" that is to say, he always exacted good pay and security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the hardness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages, gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer, and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand, became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon "Change." He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation, but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fullness of his vainglory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and, as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axletrees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began

to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret of the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent church-goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat-pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his counting-house desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crack-brained in his

old days, and that, fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new shod, saddled, and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turned upside-down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes his story in the following manner:

One hot summer afternoon in the dogdays, just as a terrible black thunder-gust was coming up, Tom sat in his counting-house, in his white linen cap and India silk morning-gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land-speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land-jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another delay.

"My family will be ruined, and brought upon the parish," said the land-jobber.

"Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.

Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black

man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrank back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat-pocket, and his big Bible on the desk under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse the lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunderstorm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets, his white cap bobbing up and down, his morning-gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp towards the old Indian fort, and that shortly after, a thunder-bolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accus-

tomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes, from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and was burned to the ground.

Such was the end to Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let *all* gripping money-brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak-trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning-gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The devil and Tom Walker." [1]

## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

### The Ambitious Guest

One September night a family had gathered round their hearth, and piled it high with the driftwood of mountain streams, the dry cones of the pine, and the splintered ruins of great trees that had come crashing down the precipice. Up the chimney roared the fire, and brightened the room with its broad blaze. The faces of the father and mother had a sober gladness; the children laughed; the eldest daughter was the image of Happiness at seventeen; and the aged grandmother, who sat knitting in the warmest place, was the image of Happiness grown old. They had found the "herb, heart's-ease," in the bleakest spot of all New England. This family were situated in the Notch of the White Hills, where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter,—giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep that the stones would often rumble down its sides and startle them at midnight.

The daughter had just uttered some simple jest that filled them all with mirth, when the wind came through the Notch and seemed to pause before their cottage—

rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation, before it passed into the valley. For a moment it saddened them, though there was nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveler, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door.

Though they dwelt in such a solitude, these people held daily converse with the world. The romantic pass of the Notch is a great artery, through which the life-blood of internal commerce is continually throbbing between Maine, on one side, and the Green Mountains and the shores of the St. Lawrence, on the other. The stage-coach always drew up before the door of the cottage. The wayfarer, with no companion but his staff, paused here to exchange a word, that the sense of loneliness might not utterly overcome him ere he could pass through the cleft of the mountain, or reach the first house in the valley. And here the teamster, on his way to Portland market, would put up for the night; and, if a bachelor, might sit an hour beyond the usual bedtime, and steal a kiss from the mountain maid at parting. It was one of those primitive taverns where the traveler pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness beyond all price. When the footsteps were heard, therefore, between the outer door and the inner one, the whole family rose up, grandmother, children, and all, as if about to welcome

some one who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs.

The door was opened by a young man. His face at first wore the melancholy expression, almost despondency, of one who travels a wild and bleak road, at nightfall and alone, but soon brightened up when he saw the kindly warmth of his reception. He felt his heart spring forward to meet them all, from the old woman, who wiped a chair with her apron, to the little child that held out its arms to him. One glance and smile placed the stranger on a footing of innocent familiarity with the eldest daughter.

"Ah, this fire is the right thing!" cried he; "especially when there is such a pleasant circle round it. I am quite benumbed; for the Notch is just like the pipe of a great pair of bellows; it has blown a terrible blast in my face all the way from Bartlett."

"Then you are going toward Vermont?" said the master of the house, as he helped to take a light knapsack off the young man's shoulders.

"Yes; to Burlington, and far enough beyond," replied he. "I meant to have been at Ethan Crawford's to-night; but a pedestrian lingers along such a road as this. It is no matter; for, when I saw this good fire, and all your cheerful faces, I felt as if you had kindled it on purpose for me, and were waiting my arrival. So I shall sit down among you, and make myself at home."

The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair to the fire when something like a heavy footstep was

heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap in passing the cottage as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his by instinct.

"The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him," said the landlord, recovering himself. "He sometimes nods his head and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree together pretty well upon the whole. Besides we have a sure place of refuge hard by if he should be coming in good earnest."

Let us now suppose the stranger to have finished his supper of bear's meat; and, by his natural felicity of manner, to have placed himself on a footing of kindness with the whole family, so that they talked as freely together as if he belonged to their mountain brood. He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit—haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man's fireside. In the household of the Notch he found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry of native growth, which they had gathered when they little thought of it from the mountain peaks and chasms, and at the very threshold of their romantic and dangerous abode. He had traveled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been a solitary path; for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept him-

self apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions. The family, too, though so kind and hospitable, had that consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should still keep a holy place where no stranger may intrude. But this evening a prophetic sympathy impelled the refined and educated youth to pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers, and constrained them to answer him with the same free confidence. And thus it should have been. Is not the kindred of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth?

The secret of the young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave. Yearning desire had been transformed to hope; and hope, long cherished, had become like certainty that, obscurely as he journeyed now, a glory was to beam on all his pathway,—though not, perhaps, while he was treading it. But when posterity should gaze back into the gloom of what was now the present, they would trace the brightness of his footsteps, brightening as meaner glories faded, and confess that a gifted one had passed from the cradle to his tomb with none to recognize him.

"As yet," cried the stranger—his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm—"as yet, I have done nothing. Were I to vanish from the earth to-morrow, none would know so much of me as you: that a nameless youth came up at nightfall from the valley of the

Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch by sunrise, and was seen no more. Not a soul would ask, 'Who was he? Whither did the wanderer go?' But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then, let Death come! I shall have built my monument!"

There was a continual flow of natural emotion, gushing forth amid abstracted reverie, which enabled the family to understand this young man's sentiments, though so foreign from their own. With quick sensibility of the ludicrous, he blushed at the ardor into which he had been betrayed. "You laugh at me," said he, taking the eldest daughter's hand, and laughing himself. "You think my ambition as nonsensical as if I were to freeze myself to death on the top of Mount Washington, only that people might spy at me from the country round about. And, truly, that would be a noble pedestal for a man's statue!"

"It is better to sit here by this fire," answered the girl, blushing, "and be comfortable and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

"I suppose," said her father, after a fit of musing, "there is something natural in what the young man says; and if my mind had been turned that way, I might have felt just the same. It is strange, wife, how his talk has set my head running on things that are pretty certain never to come to pass."

"Perhaps they may," observed the wife. "Is the man thinking what he will do when he is a widower?"

"No, no!" cried he, repelling the idea with reproach-

ful kindness. "When I think of your death, Esther, I think of mine, too. But I was wishing we had a good farm in Bartlett, or Bethlehem, or Littleton, or some other township round the White Mountains; but not where they could tumble on our heads. I should want to stand well with my neighbors and be called Squire, and sent to General Court for a term or two; for a plain, honest man may do as much good there as a lawyer. And when I should be grown quite an old man, and you an old woman, so as not to be long apart, I might die happy enough in my bed, and leave you all crying around me. A slate gravestone would suit me as well as a marble one—with just my name and age, and a verse of a hymn, and something to let people know that I lived an honest man and died a Christian."

"There now!" exclaimed the stranger; "it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man."

"We're in a strange way, to-night," said the wife, with tears in her eyes. "They say it's a sign of something, when folks' minds go a-wandering so. Hark to the children!"

They listened accordingly. The younger children had been put to bed in another room, but with an open door between, so that they could be heard talking busily among themselves. One and all seemed to have caught the infection from the fireside circle, and were outvying each other in wild wishes, and childish projects of what they would do when they came to be

men and women. At length a little boy, instead of addressing his brothers and sisters, called out to his mother.

"I'll tell you what I wish, mother," cried he. "I want you and father and grandma'm, and all of us, and the stranger too, to start right away, and go and take a drink out of the basin of the Flume!"

Nobody could help laughing at the child's notion of leaving a warm bed, and dragging them from a cheerful fire, to visit the basin of the Flume,—a brook, which tumbles over the precipice, deep within the Notch. The boy had hardly spoken when a wagon rattled along the road, and stopped a moment before the door. It appeared to contain two or three men, who were cheering their hearts with the rough chorus of a song, which resounded, in broken notes, between the cliffs, while the singers hesitated whether to continue their journey or put up here for the night."

"Father," said the girl, "they are calling you by name."

But the good man doubted whether they had really called him, and was unwilling to show himself too solicitous of gain by inviting people to patronize his house. He therefore did not hurry to the door; and the lash being soon applied, the travelers plunged into the Notch, still singing and laughing, though their music and mirth came back drearily from the heart of the mountain.

"There, mother!" cried the boy, again. "They'd have given us a ride to the Flume."

Again they laughed at the child's pertinacious fancy for a night ramble. But it happened that a light cloud passed over the daughter's spirit; she looked gravely into the fire, and drew a breath that was almost a sigh. It forced its way, in spite of a little struggle to repress it. Then starting and blushing, she looked quickly round the circle, as if they had caught a glimpse into her bosom. The stranger asked what she had been thinking of.

"Nothing," answered she, with a downcast smile. "Only I felt lonesome just then."

"Oh, I have always had a gift of feeling what is in other people's hearts," said he, half seriously. "Shall I tell the secrets of yours? For I know what to think when a young girl shivers by a warm hearth, and complains of lonesomeness at her mother's side. Shall I put these feelings into words?"

"They would not be a girl's feelings any longer if they could be put into words," replied the mountain nymph, laughing, but avoiding his eye.

All this was said apart. Perhaps a germ of love was springing in their hearts, so pure that it might blossom in Paradise, since it could not be matured on earth; for women worship such gentle dignity as his; and the proud, contemplative, yet kindly soul is oftenest captivated by simplicity like hers. But while they spoke softly, and he was watching the happy sadness, the lightsome shadows, the shy yearnings of a maiden's nature, the wind through the Notch took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said,

like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness. The light hovered about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the children, peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien, the high-browed youth, the budding girl, and the good old grandam, still knitting in the warmest place. The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

"Old folks have their notions," said she, "as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning; and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a-wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for, when she can go but a step or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you."

"What is it, mother?" cried the husband and wife at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her grave-clothes some years before,—a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since

her wedding day. But this evening an old superstition had strangely recurred to her. It used to be said in her younger days, that if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse in the coffin and beneath the clods would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

"Don't talk so, grandmother!" said the girl, shuddering.

"Now,"—continued the old woman, with singular earnestness, yet smiling strangely at her own folly,—"I want one of you, my children—when your mother is dressed and in the coffin—I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all's right?"

"Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments," murmured the stranger youth. "I wonder how mariners feel when the ship is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean—that wide and nameless sepulchre?"

For a moment, the old woman's ghastly conception so engrossed the minds of her hearers that a sound abroad in the night, rising like the roar of a blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house and all within it trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance,

or power to move. Then the same cry burst simultaneously from all their lips.

"The Slide! The Slide!"

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage, and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot—where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! they had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain, in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the house, the stream broke into two branches—shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of the great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

The next morning, the light smoke was seen stealing from the cottage chimney up the mountain side. Within, the fire was yet smouldering on the hearth, and the chairs in a circle round it, as if the inhabitants had but gone forth to view the devastation of the Slide, and would shortly return, to thank Heaven for their miraculous escape. All had left separate tokens, by which those who had known the family were made to shed a tear for each. Who has not heard their name? The story has been told far and wide, and will forever be a legend of these mountains. Poets have sung their fate.

There were circumstances which led some to suppose that a stranger had been received into the cottage on this awful night, and had shared the catastrophe of all its inmates. Others denied that there were sufficient grounds for such a conjecture. Woe for the high-souled youth, with his dream of Earthly Immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved, his death and his existence equally a doubt! Whose was the agony of that death moment?

## EDGAR ALLAN POE

### The Cask of Amontillado

The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definiteness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redressor. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit.[1] For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and

gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially; I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado,[1] and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he, "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival?"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me"—

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi"—

"I have no engagement; come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon; and as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaure* [1] closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.[2]

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving

one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.[1]

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi"—

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing: it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no inten-

tion of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or,[1] in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*" [2]

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's

bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough"—

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grave. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said, "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure*.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath my cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depths of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I cried; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi"—

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock.

Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building-stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption

the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I re-approached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognising as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he!—a very good joke indeed —an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"*For the love of God, Montresor!*"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again—

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick —on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!* [1]

## CHARLES DICKENS

### The Signal-Man

"Halloa! Below there!"

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was standing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furled round its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted from what quarter the voice came; but, instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about and looked down the Line. There was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said for my life what. But I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his figure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset that I had shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all.

"Halloa! Below!"

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

"Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?"

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked

down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question. Just then there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an on-coming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to drag me down. When such vapor as rose to my height from this rapid train had passed me, and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again, and saw him refurling the flag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with a fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled-up flag towards a point on my own level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him, "All right!" and made for that point. There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zigzag descending path notched out, which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate. It was made through a clammy stone, that became oozier and wetter as I went down. For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand, crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation

and watchfulness, that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and stepping out upon the level of the railroad, and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing, and forbidding air. So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step, and lifted his hand.

This was a lonesome post to occupy (I said), and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwelcome rarity, I hoped? In me he merely saw a man who had been shut up in narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free, had a newly awakened interest in these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used; for besides that I am not happy in opening any

conversation, there was something in the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look towards the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me.

That light was part of his charge? Was it not?

He answered in a low voice, "Don't you know it is?"

The monstrous thought came into my mind, as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since whether there may have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But, in making the action, I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

"You look at me," I said, forcing a smile, "as if you had a dread of me."

"I was doubtful," he returned, "whether I had seen you before."

"Where?"

He pointed to the red light he had looked at.

"There?" I said.

Intently watchful of me he replied (but without sound), "Yes."

"My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear."

"I think I may," he rejoined. "Yes; I am sure I may."

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well-chosen words.

Had he much to do there? Yes; that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work—manual labor—he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim those lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then, was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here,—if only to know it by sight, and to have formed his own crude ideas of its pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him when on duty to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Line than at others, and the same held good as to certain hours of the day and night. In bright weather he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such times listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.

He took me into his box, where there was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial, face, and

needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well educated, and (I hoped I might say without offence) perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in workhouses, in the police force, even in that last desperate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less, in any great railway staff. He had been, when young (if I could believe it, sitting in that hut—he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed he said in a quiet manner, with his grave dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word "Sir" from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth,—as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages and send replies. Once he had to stand without the door, and display a flag as a train passed, and made some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties, I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the circumstance that while he was speaking to me he twice broke off with a fallen color, turned his face towards the little bell when it did NOT ring, opened the door of the hut (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp), and looked out towards the red light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions he came back to the fire with the inexplicable air upon him which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

Said I, when I rose to leave him. "You almost make me think that I have met a contented man."

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on).

"I believe I used to be so," he rejoined in the low voice in which he had first spoken; "but I am troubled, sir, I am troubled."

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, however, and I took them up quickly.

"With what? What is your trouble?"

"It is very difficult to impart, sir. It is very, very difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you."

"But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be?"

"I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, sir."

"I will come at eleven."

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me.

"I'll show my white light, sir," he said in his peculiar low voice, "till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don't call out! And when you are at the top, don't call out."

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than, "Very well."

"And when you come to-morrow night, don't call out! Let me ask a parting question. What made you cry, 'Halloa! Below there!' to-night?"

"Heaven knows," said I. "I cried something to that effect—"

"Not to that effect, sir. Those were the very words. I know them well."

"Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below."

"For no other reason?"

"What other reason could I possibly have?"

"You had no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way?"

"No."

He wished me good night, and held up his light. I walked by the side of the down Line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me) until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got back to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the first notch of the zigzag next night as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bottom, with his white light on. "I have not

called out," I said, when we came close together; "may I speak now?" "By all means, sir." "Good night, then, and here's my hand." "Good night, sir, and here's mine." With that we walked side by side to his box, entered it, closed the door, and sat down by the fire.

"I have made up my mind, sir," he began, bending forward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but a little above a whisper, "that you shall not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for some one else yesterday evening. That troubles me."

"That mistake?"

"No. That some one else."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Like me?"

"I don't know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved,—violently waved. This way."

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating, with the utmost passion and vehemence, "For God's sake, clear the way!"

"One moonlight night," said the man, "I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry, 'Halloa! Below there!' I started up, looked from that door, and saw this some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, 'Look out! Look out!' And then again, 'Halloa! Below there! Look out!' I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran

towards the figure, calling, 'What's wrong? What has happened? Where?' It stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up at it, and had my hand stretched out to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone."

"Into the tunnel?" said I.

"No. I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped, and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I ran out again faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed in both ways, 'An alarm has been given. Is anything wrong?' The answer came back both ways, 'All well.'"

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine, I showed him how this figure must be a deception of his sense of sight; and how that figures, originating in disease of the delicate nerves that minister to the functions of the eye, were known to have often troubled patients, some of whom had become conscious of the nature of their affliction, and had even proved it by experiments upon themselves. "As to an imaginary cry," said I, "do but listen for a moment to the wind in this unnatural valley while we speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes of the telegraph wires!"

That was all very well, he returned, after we had sat listening a while, and he ought to know something of the wind and the wires,—he who so often passed long winter nights there, alone and watching. But he would beg to remark that he had not finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm:—

"Within six hours after the Appearance, the memorable accident on this Line happened, and within ten hours the dead and wounded were brought along through the tunnel over the spot where the figure had stood."

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but I did my best against it. It was not to be denied, I rejoined, that this was a remarkable coincidence, calculated deeply to impress his mind. But it was unquestionable that remarkable coincidences did continually occur, and they must be taken into account in dealing with such a subject. Though to be sure I must admit, I added (for I thought I saw that he was going to bring the objection to bear upon me), men of common sense did not allow much for coincidences in making the ordinary calculations of life.

He again begged to remark that he had not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions.

"This," he said, again laying his hand upon my arm and glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes, "was just a year ago. Six or seven months passed. and I had

recovered from the surprise and shock, when one morning, as the day was breaking, I, standing at the door, looked towards the red light, and saw the spectre again." He stopped with a fixed look at me.

"Did it cry out?"

"No. It was silent."

"Did it wave its arm?"

"No. It leaned against the shaft of the light, with both hands before the face. Like this."

Once more I followed his action with my eyes. It was an action of mourning. I have seen such an attitude in stone figures on tombs.

"Did you go up to it?"

"I came in and sat down, partly to collect my thoughts, partly because it had turned me faint. When I went to the door again, daylight was above me, and the ghost was gone."

"But nothing followed? Nothing came of this?"

He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod each time.

"That very day, as a train came out of the tunnel, I noticed, at a carriage window on my side, what looked like a confusion of hands and heads, and something waved. I saw it just in time to signal the driver, Stop! He shut off, and put his brake on, but the train drifted past here a hundred and fifty yards or more. I ran after it, and as I went along, heard terrible screams and cries. A beautiful young lady had died instantaneously in one of the compartments, and was brought in here, and laid down on this floor between us."

Involuntarily I pushed my chair back, as I looked from the boards at which he pointed to himself.

"True, sir. True. Precisely as it happened, so I tell it you."

I could think of nothing to say to any purpose, and my mouth was very dry. The wind and the wires took up the story with a long lamenting wail.

He resumed. "Now, sir, mark this, and judge how my mind is troubled. The spectre came back a week ago. Ever since, it has been there, now and again, by fits and starts."

"At the light?"

"At the danger-light."

"What does it seem to do?"

He repeated, if possible with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of "For God's sake, clear the way!"

Then he went on. "I have no peace or rest for it. It calls to me, for many minutes together, in an agonized manner, 'Below there! Look out! Look out!' It stands waving to me. It rings my little bell—"

I caught at that. "Did it ring your bell yesterday evening when I was here, and you went to the door?"

"Twice."

"Why, see," said I, "how your imagination misleads you! My eyes were on the bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and, if I am a living man, it did NOT ring at those times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung in the natural course of physical things by the station communicating with you."

He shook his head. "I have never made a mistake as to that yet, sir. I have never confused the spectre's ring with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration in the bell that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I don't wonder that you failed to hear it. But *I* heard it."

"And did the spectre seem to be there when you looked out?"

"It WAS there."

"Both times?"

He repeated firmly: "Both times."

"Will you come to the door with me, and look for it now?"

He bit his under lip as though he were somewhat unwilling, but arose. I opened the door, and stood on the step, while he stood in the doorway. There was the danger-light. There was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There were the high, wet stone walls of the cutting. There were the stars above them.

"Do you see it?" I asked him, taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained but not very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I had directed them earnestly towards the same spot.

"No," he answered. "It is not there."

"Agreed," said I.

We went in again, shut the door, and resumed our seats. I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the

conversation in such a matter of course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself placed in the weakest of positions.

"By this time you will fully understand, sir," he said, "that what troubles me so dreadfully is the question, What does the spectre mean?"

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

"What is its warning against?" he said, ruminating, with his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them on me. "What is the danger? Where is the danger? There is danger overhanging somewhere on the Line. Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted this third time after what has gone before. But surely this is a cruel haunting of *me*. What can I do?"

He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his heated forehead.

"If I telegraph Danger on either side of me, or on both, I can give no reason for it," he went on, wiping the palms of his hands. "I should get into trouble, and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work,—Message: 'Danger! Take care!' Answer: 'What Danger? Where?' Message: 'Don't know. But, for God's sake, take care!' They would displace me. What else could they do?"

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

"When it first stood under the danger-light," he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hand outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, "why not tell me where that accident was to happen,—if it must happen? Why not tell me how it could be averted,—if it could have been averted? When on its second coming it hid its face, why not tell me, instead, 'She is going to die. Let them keep her at home?' If it came, on those two occasions, only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord help me! A mere poor signal-man on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act?"

When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man's sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all questions of reality or unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty must do well, and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding Appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupation incidental to his post as the night advanced began to make larger demands on his attention; and I left him at two in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he would not hear of it.

That I more than once looked back at the red light

as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that either.

But what ran most in my thoughts was the consideration, how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I had proved the man to be intelligent, vigilant, painstaking, and exact; but how long might he remain so, in his state of mind? Though in a subordinate position, still he held a most important trust, and would I (for instance) like to stake my own life on the chances of his continuing to execute it with precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there would be something treacherous in my communicating what he had told me to his superiors in the Company, without first being plain to himself and proposing a middle course to him, I ultimately resolved to offer to accompany him (otherwise keeping his secret for the present) to the wisest medical practitioner we could hear of in those parts, and to take his opinion. A change in his time of duty would come round next night, he had apprised me, and he would be off an hour or two after sunrise, and on again soon after sunset. I had appointed to return accordingly.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it. The sun was not yet quite down when I traversed the field path near the top of the deep cutting. I would extend my walk for an hour, I said to

myself, half an hour on and half an hour back, and it would then be time to go to my signal-man's box.

Before pursuing my stroll, I stepped to the brink, and mechanically looked down, from the point from which I had first seen him. I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon me when, close at the mouth of the tunnel, I saw the appearance of a man, with his left sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed, and that there was a little group of other men, standing at a short distance, to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the gesture he had made. The danger-light was not yet lighted. Against its shaft, a little low hut, entirely new to me, had been made of some wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked no bigger than a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong,—with a flashing, self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there, and causing no one to be sent to overlook or correct what he did,—I descended the notched path with all the speed I could make.

"What is the matter?" I asked the men.

"Signal-man killed this morning, sir."

"Not the man belonging to that box?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not the man I know?"

"You will recognize him, sir, if you knew him,"

said the man who spoke for the others, solemnly uncovering his own head, and raising an end of the tarpaulin, "for his face is quite composed."

"Oh, how did this happen, how did this happen?" I asked, turning from one to another as the hut closed in again.

"He was cut down by an engine, sir. No man in England knew his work better. But somehow he was not clear of the outer rail. It was just at broad day. He had struck the light, and had the lamp in his hand. As the engine came out of the tunnel, his back was towards her, and she cut him down. The man drove her, and was showing how it happened. Show the gentleman, Tom."

The man, who wore a rough dark dress, stepped back to his former place at the mouth of the tunnel.

"Coming round the curve in the tunnel, sir," he said, "I saw him at the end, like as if I saw him down a perspective-glass. There was no time to check speed, and I knew him to be very careful. As he didn't seem to take heed of the whistle, I shut it off when we were running down upon him, and called to him as loud as I could call."

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'Below there! Look out! Look out! For God's sake, clear the way!'"

I started.

"Ah! it was a dreadful time, sir. I never left off calling to him. I put this arm before my eyes not to see, and I waved this arm to the last; but it was no use"

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell on any one of its curious circumstances more than on any other, I may, in closing it, point out the coincidence that the warning of the engine-driver included, not only the words which the unfortunate signal-man had repeated to me as haunting him, but also the words which I myself—not he—had attached, and only in his mind, to the gesticulation he had imitated.

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

### The Sire De Malétroit's Door

Denis de Beaulieu was not yet two-and-twenty, but he counted himself a grown man, and a very accomplished cavalier into the bargain. Lads were early formed in that rough, warfaring epoch; and when one has been in a pitched battle and a dozen raids, has killed one's man in an honorable fashion, and knows a thing or two of strategy and mankind, a certain swagger in the gait is surely to be pardoned. He had put up his horse with due care, and supped with due deliberation; and then, in a very agreeable frame of mind, went out to pay a visit in the gray of the evening. It was not a very wise proceeding on the young man's part. He would have done better to remain beside the fire or go decently to bed. For the town was full of the troops of Burgundy and England under a mixed command; and though Denis was there on safe-conduct, his safe-conduct was like to serve him little on a chance encounter.

It was September, 1429; the weather had fallen sharp; a flighty piping wind, laden with showers, beat about the township; and the dead leaves ran riot along the streets. Here and there a window was already lighted up; and the noise of men-at-arms making merry

over supper within, came forth in fits and was swallowed up and carried away by the wind. The night fell swiftly; the flag of England, fluttering on the spire-top, grew ever fainter and fainter against the flying clouds—a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the sky. As the night fell the wind rose, and began to hoot under archways and roar amid the tree-tops in the valley below the town.

Denis de Beaulieu walked fast and was soon knocking at his friend's door; but though he promised himself to stay only a little while and make an early return, his welcome was so pleasant, and he found so much to delay him, that it was already long past midnight before he said good-bye upon the threshold. The wind had fallen again in the meanwhile; the night was as black as the grave; not a star, nor a glimmer of moonshine, slipped through the canopy of cloud. Denis was ill-acquainted with the intricate lanes of Chateau Landon; even by daylight he had found some trouble in picking his way; and in this absolute darkness he soon lost it altogether. He was certain of one thing only—to keep mounting the hill; for his friend's house lay at the lower end, or tail, of Chateau Landon, while the inn was up at the head, under the great church spire. With this clue to go upon he stumbled and groped forward, now breathing more freely in open places where there was a good slice of sky overhead, now feeling along the wall in stifling closes. It is an eerie and mysterious position to be thus submerged in opaque blackness in an almost unknown town. The

silence is terrifying in its possibilities. The touch of cold window bars to the exploring hand startles the man like the touch of a toad; the inequalities of the pavement shake his heart into his mouth; a piece of denser darkness threatens an ambuscade or a chasm in the pathway; and where the air is brighter, the houses put on strange and bewildering appearances, as if to lead him farther from his way. For Denis, who had to regain his inn without attracting notice, there was real danger as well as mere discomfort in the walk; and he went warily and boldly at once, and at every corner paused to make an observation.

He had been for some time threading a lane so narrow that he could touch a wall with either hand when it began to open out and go sharply downward. Plainly this lay no longer in the direction of his inn; but the hope of a little more light tempted him forward to reconnoitre. The lane ended in a terrace with a bartizan wall which gave an outlook between high houses, as out of an embrasure, into the valley lying dark and formless several hundred feet below. Denis looked down, and could discern a few tree-tops waving and a single speck of brightness where the river ran across a weir. The weather was clearing up, and the sky had lightened, so as to show the outline of the heavy clouds and the dark margin of the hills. By the uncertain glimmer, the house on his left hand should be a place of some pretensions; it was surmounted by several pinnacles and turret-tops; the round stern of a chapel, with a fringe of flying buttresses, projected boldly

from the main block; and the door was sheltered under a deep porch carved with figures and overhung by two long gargoyles. The windows of the chapel gleamed through their intricate tracery with a light as of many tapers, and threw out the buttresses and the peaked roof in a more intense blackness against the sky. It was plainly the hotel of some great family of the neighborhood; and as it reminded Denis of a town house of his own at Bourges, he stood for some time gazing up at and mentally gauging the skill of the architects and the consideration of the two families.

There seemed to be no issue to the terrace but the lane by which he had reached it; he could only retrace his steps, but he had gained some notion of his whereabouts, and hoped by this means to hit the main thoroughfare and speedily regain the inn. He was reckoning without that chapter of accidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career; for he had not gone back above a hundred yards before he saw a light coming to meet him, and heard loud voices speaking together in the echoing narrows of the lane. It was a party of men-at-arms going the night round with torches. Denis assured himself that they had all been making free with the wine-bowl, and were in no mood to be particular about safe-conducts or the niceties of chivalrous war. It was as like as not that they would kill him like a dog and leave him where he fell. The situation was inspiriting but nervous. Their own torches would conceal him from sight, he reflected, and he hoped that they would drown the noise

of his footsteps with their own empty voices. If he were but fleet and silent, he might evade their notice altogether.

Unfortunately, as he turned to beat a retreat, his foot rolled upon a pebble; he fell against the wall with an ejaculation, and his sword rang loudly on the stones. Two or three voices demanded who went there—some in French, some in English; but Denis made no reply, and ran the faster down the lane. Once upon the terrace, he paused to look back. They still kept calling after him, and just then began to double the pace in pursuit, with a considerable clank of armor, and great tossing of the torchlight to and fro in the narrow jaws of the passage.

Denis cast a look around, and darted into the porch. There he might escape observation, or—if that were too much to expect—was in a capital posture whether for parley or defense. So thinking, he drew his sword and tried to set his back against the door. To his surprise, it yielded behind his weight; and though he turned in a moment, continued to swing back on oiled and noiseless hinges, until it stood wide open on a black interior. When things fall out opportunely for the person concerned, he is not apt to be critical about the how or why, his own immediate personal convenience seeming a sufficient reason for the strangest oddities and revolutions in our sublunary things; and so Denis, without a moment's hesitation, stepped within and partly closed the door behind him to conceal his place of refuge. Nothing was further from his thoughts than

to close it altogether; but for some inexplicable reason—perhaps by a spring or a weight—the ponderous mass of oak whipped itself out of his fingers and clanked to, with a formidable rumble and a noise like the falling of an automatic bar.

The round, at that very moment, debouched upon the terrace and proceeded to summon him with shouts and curses. He heard them ferreting in the dark corners; the stock of a lance even rattled along the outer surface of the door behind which he stood; but these gentlemen were in too high a humor to be long delayed, and soon made off down a cork-screw pathway which had escaped Denis's observation, and passed out of sight and hearing along the battlements of the town.

Denis breathed again. He gave them a few minutes' grace for fear of accidents, and then groped about for some means of opening the door and slipping forth again. The inner surface was quite smooth, not a handle, not a moulding, not a projection of any sort. He got his fingernails round the edges and pulled, but the mass was immovable. He shook it; it was as firm as a rock. Denis de Beaulieu frowned and gave vent to a little noiseless whistle. What ailed the door? he wondered. Why was it open? How came it to shut so easily and so effectually after him? There was something obscure and underhand about all this, that was little to the young man's fancy. It looked like a snare; and yet who could suppose a snare in such a quiet by-street and in a house of so prosperous and even

noble an exterior? And yet—snare or no snare, intentionally or unintentionally—here he was, prettily trapped; and for the life of him he could see no way out of it again. The darkness began to weigh upon him. He gave ear; all was silent without, but within and close by he seemed to catch a faint sighing, a faint sobbing rustle, a little stealthy creak—as though many persons were at his side, holding themselves quite still, and governing even their respiration with the extreme of slyness. The idea went to his vitals with a shock, and he faced about suddenly as if to defend his life. Then, for the first time, he became aware of a light about the level of his eyes and at some distance in the interior of the house—a vertical thread of light, widening towards the bottom, such as might escape between two wings of an arras over a doorway. To see anything was a relief to Denis; it was like a piece of solid ground to a man laboring in a morass; his mind seized upon it with avidity; and he stood staring at it and trying to piece together some logical conception of his surroundings. Plainly there was a flight of steps ascending from his own level to that of this illuminated doorway; and indeed he thought he could make out another thread of light, as fine as a needle and as faint as phosphorescence, which might very well be reflected along the polished wood of a handrail. Since he had begun to suspect that he was not alone, his heart had continued to beat with smothering violence, and an intolerable desire for action of any sort had possessed itself of his spirit. He was in deadly peril, he believed. What could be more natural

than to mount the staircase, lift the curtain, and confront his difficulty at once? At least he would be dealing with something tangible; at least he would be no longer in the dark. He stepped forward slowly with outstretched hands, until his foot struck the bottom step; then he rapidly scaled the stairs, stood for a moment to compose his expression, lifted the arras and went in.

He found himself in a large apartment of polished stone. There were three doors; one on each of three sides; all similarly curtained with tapestry. The fourth side was occupied by two large windows and a great stone chimney-piece, carved with the arms of the Malétroits. Denis recognized the bearings, and was gratified to find himself in such good hands. The room was strongly illuminated; but it contained little furniture except a heavy table and a chair or two, the hearth was innocent of fire, and the pavement was but sparsely strewn with rushes clearly many days old.

On a high chair beside the chimney, and directly facing Denis as he entered, sat a little old gentleman in a fur tippet. He sat with his legs crossed and his hands folded, and a cup of spiced wine stood by his elbow on a bracket on the wall. His countenance had a strongly masculine cast; not properly human, but such as we see in the bull, the goat, or the domestic boar; something equivocal and wheedling, something greedy, brutal, and dangerous. The upper lip was inordinately full, as though swollen by a blow or a toothache; and the smile, the peaked eyebrows, and the small, strong eyes were quaintly and almost comically evil in expres-

sion. Beautiful white hair hung straight all round his head, like a saint's, and fell in a single curl upon the tippet. His beard and moustache were the pink of venerable sweetness. Age, probably in consequence of inordinate precautions, had left no mark upon his hands; and the Malétroit hand was famous. It would be difficult to imagine anything at once so fleshy and so delicate in design; the taper, sensual fingers were like those of one of Leonardo's [1] women; the fork of the thumb made a dimpled protuberance when closed; the nails were perfectly shaped, and of a dead, surprising whiteness. It rendered his aspect tenfold more redoubtable, that a man with hands like these should keep them devoutly folded like a virgin martyr—that a man with so intent and startling an expression of face should sit patiently on his seat and contemplate people with an unwinking stare, like a god's, or a god's statue. His quiescence seemed ironical and treacherous, it fitted so poorly with his looks.

Such was Alain, Sire de Malétroit.

Denis and he looked silently at each other for a second or two.

"Pray step in," said the Sire de Malétroit. "I have been expecting you all the evening."

He had not risen but he accompanied his words with a smile and a slight but courteous inclination of the head. Partly from the smile, partly from the strange musical murmur with which the Sire prefaced his observation, Denis felt a strong shudder of disgust go through his marrow. And what with disgust and hones-

confusion of mind, he could scarcely get words together in reply.

"I fear," he said, "that this is a double accident. I am not the person you suppose me. It seems you were looking for a visit; but for my part, nothing was further from my thoughts—nothing could be more contrary to my wishes—than this intrusion."

"Well, well," replied the old gentleman indulgently, "here you are, which is the main point. Seat yourself, my friend, and put yourself entirely at your ease. We shall arrange our little affairs presently."

Denis perceived that the matter was still complicated with some misconception, and he hastened to continue his explanations.

"Your door——" he began.

"About my door?" asked the other raising his peaked eyebrows. "A little piece of ingenuity." And he shrugged his shoulders. "A hospitable fancy! By your own account, you were not desirous of making my acquaintance. We old people look for such reluctance now and then; when it touches our honor, we cast about until we find some way of overcoming it. You arrive uninvited, but believe me very welcome."

"You persist in error, sir," said Denis. "There can be no question between you and me. I am a stranger in this countryside. My name is Denis, damoiseau [1] de Beaulieu. If you see me in your house, it is only——"

"My young friend," interrupted the other, "you will permit me to have my own ideas on that subject. They probably differ from yours at the present mo-

ment," he added with a leer, "but time will show which of us is in the right."

Denis was convinced he had to do with a lunatic. He seated himself with a shrug, content to wait the upshot; and a pause ensued, during which he thought he could distinguish a hurried gabbling as of prayer from behind the arras immediately opposite him. Sometimes there seemed to be but one person engaged, sometimes two; and the vehemence of the voice, low as it was, seemed to indicate either great haste or an agony of spirit. It occurred to him that this piece of tapestry covered the entrance to the chapel he had noticed from without.

The old gentleman meanwhile surveyed Denis from head to foot with a smile, and from time to time emitted little noises like a bird or a mouse, which seemed to indicate a high degree of satisfaction. This state of matters became rapidly insupportable; and Denis, to put an end to it, remarked politely that the wind had gone down.

The old gentleman fell into a fit of silent laughter, so prolonged and violent that he became quite red in the face. Denis got upon his feet at once, and put on his hat with a flourish.

"Sir," he said, "if you are in your wits, you have affronted me grossly. If you are out of them, I flatter myself I can find better employment for my brains than to talk with lunatics. My conscience is clear; you have made a fool of me from the first moment; you have refused to hear my explanations; and now

there is no power under God will make me stay here any longer; and if I cannot make my way out in a more decent fashion, I will hack your door in pieces with my sword."

The Sire de Malétroit raised his right hand and wagged it at Denis with the fore and little fingers extended.

"My dear nephew," he said, "sit down."

"Nephew!" retorted Denis, "you lie in your throat;" and he snapped his fingers in his face.

"Sit down, you rogue!" cried the old gentleman, in a sudden, harsh voice, like the barking of a dog. "Do you fancy," he went on, "that when I had made my little contrivance for the door I had stopped short with that? If you prefer to be bound hand and foot till your bones ache, rise and try to go away. If you choose to remain a free young buck, agreeably conversing with an old gentleman—why, sit where you are in peace, and God be with you."

"Do you mean I am a prisoner?" demanded Denis.

"I state the facts," replied the other. "I would rather leave the conclusion to yourself."

Denis sat down again. Externally he managed to keep pretty calm, but within, he was now boiling with anger, now chilled with apprehension. He no longer felt convinced that he was dealing with a madman. And if the old gentleman was sane, what, in God's name, had he to look for? What absurd or tragical adventure had befallen him? What countenance was he to assume?

While he was thus unpleasantly reflecting, the arras that overhung the chapel door was raised, and a tall priest in his robes came forth and, giving a long, keen stare at Denis, said something in an undertone to Sire de Malétroit.

"She is in a better frame of spirit?" asked the latter.

"She is more resigned, messire," replied the priest.

"Now the Lord help her, she is hard to please!" sneered the old gentleman. "A likely stripling—not ill-born—and of her own choosing, too? Why, what more would the jade have?"

"The situation is not usual for a young damsel," said the other, "and somewhat trying to her blushes."

"She should have thought of that before she began the dance! It was none of my choosing, God knows that: but since she is in it, by our lady, she shall carry it to the end." And then addressing Denis, "Monsieur de Beaulieu," he asked, "may I present you to my niece? She has been waiting your arrival, I may say, with even greater impatience than myself."

Denis had resigned himself with a good grace—all he desired was to know the worst of it as speedily as possible; so he rose at once, and bowed in acquiescence. The Sire de Malétroit followed his example and limped, with the assistance of the chaplain's arm, towards the chapel-door. The priest pulled aside the arras, and all three entered. The building had considerable architectural pretensions. A light groining sprang from six stout columns, and hung down in two rich pendants from the centre of the vault. The place

terminated behind the altar in a round end, embossed and honeycombed with a superfluity of ornament in relief, and pierced by many little windows shaped like stars, trefoils, or wheels. These windows were imperfectly glazed, so that the night air circulated freely in the chapel. The tapers, of which there must have been near half a hundred burning on the altar, were unmercifully blown about; and the light went through many different phases of brilliancy and semi-eclipse. On the steps in front of the altar knelt a young girl richly attired as a bride. A chill settled over Denis as he observed her costume; he fought with desperate energy against the conclusion that was being thrust upon his mind; it could not—it should not—be as he feared.

"Blanche," said the Sire, in his most flute-like tones "I have brought a friend to see you, my little girl; turn round and give him your pretty hand. It is good to be devout; but it is necessary to be polite, my niece."

The girl rose to her feet and turned toward the newcomers. She moved all of a piece; but shame and exhaustion were expressed in every line of her fresh young body; and she held her head down and kept her eyes on the pavement, as she came slowly forward. In the course of her advance, her eyes fell upon Denis de Beaulieu's feet—feet of which he was justly vain, be it remarked, and wore in the most elegant accoutrement even while traveling. She paused—started, as if his yellow boots had conveyed some shocking meaning—and glanced suddenly up into the wearer's countenance.

Their eyes met; shame gave place to horror and terror in her looks; the blood left her lips; with a piercing scream she covered her face with her hands and sank upon the chapel floor.

"This is not the man!" she cried. "My uncle, this is not the man!"

The Sire de Malétroit chirped agreeably. "Of course not," he said, "I expected as much. It was so unfortunate you could not remember his name."

"Indeed," she cried, "indeed, I have never seen this person till this moment—I have never so much as set eyes upon him—I never wish to see him again. Sir," she said, turning to Denis, "if you are a gentleman, you will bear me out. Have I ever seen you—have you ever seen me—before this accursed hour?"

"To speak for myself, I have never had that pleasure," answered the young man. "This is the first time, messire, that I have met with your engaging niece."

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders.

"I am distressed to hear it," he said. "But it is never too late to begin. I had little more acquaintance with my own late lady ere I married her; which proves," he added, with a grimace, "that these impromptu marriages may often produce an excellent understanding in the long run. As the bridegroom is to have a voice in the matter, I will give him two hours to make up for lost time before we proceed with the ceremony." And he turned toward the door, followed by the clergyman.

The girl was on her feet in a moment. "My uncle, you cannot be in earnest," she said. "I declare before God I will stab myself rather than be forced on that young man. The heart rises at it; God forbids such marriages; you dishonor your white hair. Oh, my uncle, pity me! There is not a woman in all the world but would prefer death to such a nuptial. Is it possible," she added, faltering,—"is it possible that you do not believe me—that you still think this"—and she pointed at Denis with a tremor of anger and contempt—"that you still think *this* to be the man?"

"Frankly," said the old gentleman, pausing on the threshold, "I do. But let me explain to you once for all, Blanche de Malétroit, my way of thinking about this affair. When you took it into your head to dishonor my family and the name that I have borne, in peace and war, for more than three-score years, you forfeited, not only the right to question my designs, but that of looking me in the face. If your father had been alive, he would have spat on you and turned you out of doors. His was the hand of iron. You may bless your God you have only to deal with the hand of velvet, mademoiselle. It was my duty to get you married without delay. Out of pure good-will, I have tried to find your own gallant for you. And I believe I have succeeded. But before God and all the holy angels, Blanche de Malétroit, if I have not, I care not one jack-straw. So let me recommend you to be polite to our young friend; for upon my word, your next groom may be less appetizing."

And with that he went out, with the chaplain at his heels; and the arras fell behind the pair.

The girl turned upon Denis with flashing eyes.

"And what, sir," she demanded, "may be the meaning of all this?"

"God knows," returned Denis, gloomily. "I am a prisoner in this house, which seems full of mad people. More I know not; and nothing do I understand."

"And pray how came you here?" she asked.

He told her as briefly as he could. "For the rest," he added, "perhaps you will follow my example, and tell me the answer to all these riddles, and what, in God's name, is like to be the end of it."

She stood silent for a little, and he could see her lips tremble and her tearless eyes burn with a feverish lustre. Then she pressed her forehead in both hands.

"Alas, how my head aches!" she said wearily—"to say nothing of my poor heart! But it is due to you to know my story, unmaidenly as it must seem. I am called Blanche de Malétroit; I have been without father or mother for—oh! for as long as I can recollect, and indeed I have been most unhappy all my life. Three months ago a young captain began to stand near me every day in church. I could see that I pleased him; I am much to blame, but I was so glad that anyone should love me; and when he passed me a letter, I took it home with me and read it with great pleasure. Since that time he has written many. He was so anxious to speak with me, poor fellow! and kept asking me to leave the door open some evening that we might have

two words upon the stair. For he knew how much my uncle trusted me." She gave something like a sob at that, and it was a moment before she could go on. "My uncle is a hard man, but he is very shrewd," she said at last. "He has performed many feats in war, and was a great person at court, and much trusted by Queen Isabeau in old days. How he came to suspect me I cannot tell; but it is hard to keep anything from his knowledge; and this morning, as we came from mass, he took my hand into his, forced it open, and read my little billet, walking by my side all the while. When he finished, he gave it back to me with great politeness. It contained another request to have the door left open; and this has been the ruin of us all. My uncle kept me strictly in my room until evening, and then ordered me to dress myself as you see me—a hard mockery for a young girl, do you not think so? I suppose, when he could not prevail with me to tell him the captain's name, he must have laid a trap for him: into which, alas! you have fallen in the anger of God. I looked for much confusion; for how could I tell whether he was willing to take me for his wife on these sharp terms? He might have been trifling with me from the first; or I might have made myself too cheap in his eyes. But truly I had not looked for such a shameful punishment as this! I could not think that God would let a girl be so disgraced before a young man. And now I tell you all; and I can scarcely hope that you will not despise me."

Denis made her a respectful inclination.

"Madam," he said, "you have honored me by your confidence. It remains for me to prove that I am not unworthy of the honor. Is Messire de Malêtroit at hand?"

"I believe he is writing in the salle[1] without," she answered.

"May I lead you thither, madam?" asked Denis, offering his hand with his most courtly bearing.

She accepted it; and the pair passed out of the chapel, Blanche in a very drooping and shamefast condition, but Denis strutting and ruffling in the consciousness of a mission, and the boyish certainty of accomplishing it with honor.

The Sire de Malêtroit rose to meet them with an ironical obeisance.

"Sir," said Denis, with the grandest possible air, "I believe I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage; and let me tell you at once, I will be no party to forcing the inclination of this young lady. Had it been freely offered to me, I should have been proud to accept her hand, for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful; but as things are, I now have the honor, messire, of refusing."

Blanche looked at him with gratitude in her eyes; but the old gentleman only smiled and smiled, until his smile grew positively sickening to Denis.

"I am afraid," he said, "Monsieur de Beaulieu, that you do not perfectly understand the choice I have offered you. Follow me, I beseech you, to this window." And he led the way to one of the large windows which

stood open on the night. "You observe," he went on, "there is an iron ring, in the upper masonry, and reeved through that, a very efficacious rope. Now, mark my words: if you should find your disinclination to my niece's person insurmountable, I shall have you hanged out of this window before sunrise. I shall only proceed to such an extremity with the greatest regret, you may believe me. For it is not at all your death that I desire, but my niece's establishment in life. At the same time, it must come to that if you prove obstinate. Your family, Monsieur de Beaulieu, is very well in its way; but if you sprang from Charlemagne, you should not refuse the hand of a Malétroit with impunity—not if she had been as common as the Paris road—not if she were as hideous as the gargoyle over my door. Neither my niece nor you, nor my own private feelings, move me at all in this matter. The honor of my house has been compromised; I believe you to be the guilty person, at least you are now in the secret; and you can hardly wonder if I request you to wipe out the stain. If you will not, your blood be on your own head! It will be no great satisfaction to me to have your interesting relics kicking their heels in the breeze below my windows, but a half a loaf is better than no bread, and if I cannot cure the dishonor, I shall at least stop the scandal."

There was a pause.

"I believe there are other ways of settling such imbroglios among gentlemen," said Denis. "You wear a sword, and I hear you have used it with distinction."

The Sire de Malétroit made a signal to the chaplain, who crossed the room with long silent strides and raised the arras over the third of the three doors. It was only a moment before he let it fall again; but Denis had time to see a dusky passage full of armed men.

"When I was a little younger, I should have been delighted to honor you, Monsieur de Beaulieu," said Sire Alain; "but I am now too old. Faithful retainers are the sinews of age, and I must employ the strength I have. This is one of the hardest things to swallow as a man grows up in years; but with a little patience, even this becomes habitual. You and the lady seem to prefer the salle for what remains of your two hours; and as I have no desire to cross your preference, I shall resign it to your use with all the pleasure in the world. No haste!" he added, holding up his hand, as he saw a dangerous look come into Denis de Beaulieu's face. "If your mind revolt against hanging, it will be time enough two hours hence to throw yourself out of the window or upon the pikes of my retainers. Two hours of life are always two hours. A great many things may turn up in even as little a while as that. And, besides, if I understand her appearance, my niece has something to say to you. You will not disfigure your last hours by a want of politeness to a lady?"

Denis looked at Blanche, and she made him an imploring gesture.

It is likely that the old gentleman was hugely pleased at this symptom of an understanding; for he smiled on both, and added sweetly; "If you will give me your

word of honor, Monsieur de Beaulieu, to await my return at the end of the two hours before attempting anything desperate, I shall withdraw my retainers, and let you speak in greater privacy with mademoiselle."

Denis again glanced at the girl, who seemed to beseech him to agree.

"I give you my word of honor," he said.

Messire de Malétroit bowed, and proceeded to limp about the apartment, clearing his throat the while with that odd musical chirp which had already grown so irritating in the ears of Denis de Beaulieu. He first possessed himself of some papers which lay upon the table; then he went to the mouth of the passage and appeared to give an order to the men behind the arras; and lastly he hobbled out through the door by which Denis had come in, turning upon the threshold to address a last smiling bow to the young couple, and followed by the chaplain with a hand-lamp.

No sooner were they alone than Blanche advanced towards Denis with her hands extended. Her face was flushed and excited, and her eyes shone with tears.

"You shall not die!" she cried, "you shall marry me after all."

"You seem to think, madam," replied Denis, "that I stand much in fear of death."

"Oh, no, no," she said, "I see you are no poltroon. It is for my own sake—I could not bear to have you slain for such a scruple."

"I am afraid," returned Denis, "that you underrate the difficulty, madam. What you may be too generous

to refuse, I may be too proud to accept. In a moment of noble feeling towards me, you forget what you perhaps owe to others."

He had the decency to keep his eyes on the floor as he said this, and after he had finished, so as not to spy upon her confusion. She stood silent for a moment, then walked suddenly away, and falling on her uncle's chair, fairly burst out sobbing. Denis was in the acme of embarrassment. He looked round, as if to seek for inspiration, and seeing a stool, plumped down upon it for something to do. There he sat playing with the guard of his rapier, and wishing himself dead a thousand times over, and buried in the nastiest kitchen-heap in France. His eyes wandered around the apartment, but found nothing to arrest them. There were such wide spaces between the furniture, the light fell so badly and cheerlessly over all, the dark outside air looked in so coldly through the windows, that he thought he had never seen a church so vast, nor a tomb so melancholy. The regular sobs of Blanche de Malétroit measured out the time like the ticking of a clock. He read the device upon the shield over and over again, until his eyes became obscured; he stared into shadowy corners until he imagined they were swarming with horrible animals; and every now and again he awoke with a start, to remember that his last two hours were running, and death was on the march.

Oftener and oftener, as the time went on, did his glance settle on the girl herself. Her face was bowed forward and covered with her hands, and she was

shaken at intervals by the convulsive hiccup of grief. Even thus she was not an unpleasant object to dwell upon, so plump and yet so fine, with a warm brown skin, and the most beautiful hair, Denis thought, in the whole world of womankind. Her hands were like her uncle's: but they were more in place at the end of her young arms, and looked infinitely soft and caressing. He remembered how her blue eyes had shone upon him, full of anger, pity, and innocence. And the more he dwelt on her perfections, the uglier death looked, and the more deeply was he smitten with penitence at her continued tears. Now he felt that no man could have the courage to leave a world which contained so beautiful a creature; and now he would have given forty minutes of his last hour to have unsaid his cruel speech.

Suddenly a hoarse and ragged peal of cockcrow rose to their ears from the dark valley below the windows. And this shattering noise in the silence of all around was like a light in a dark place, and shook them both out of their reflections.

"Alas, can I do nothing to help you?" she said looking up.

"Madam," replied Denis, with a fine irrelevancy, "if I have said anything to wound you, believe me, it was for your own sake and not for mine."

She thanked him with a tearful look.

"I feel your position cruelly," he went on. "The world has been bitter hard on you. Your uncle is a disgrace to mankind. Believe me, madam, there is no young gentleman in all France but would be glad of

my opportunity, to die in doing you a momentary service."

"I know already that you can be very brave and generous," she answered. "What I *want* to know is whether I can serve you—now or afterwards," she added, with a quaver.

"Most certainly," he answered with a smile. "Let me sit beside you as if I were a friend, instead of a foolish intruder; try to forget how awkwardly we are placed to one another; make my last moments go pleasantly; and you will do me the chief service possible."

"You are very gallant," she added with a yet deeper sadness . . . "very gallant . . . and it somehow pains me. But draw nearer, if you please; and if you find anything to say to me, you will at least make certain of a very friendly listener. Ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu," she broke forth—"ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu, how can I look you in the face?" And she fell to weeping again with a renewed effusion.

"Madam," said Denis, taking her hand in both of his, "reflect on the little time I have before me, and the great bitterness into which I am cast by the sight of your distress. Spare me, in my last moments, the spectacle of what I cannot cure even with the sacrifice of my life."

"I am very selfish," answered Blanche. "I will be braver, Monsieur de Beaulieu, for your sake. But think if I can do you no kindness in the future—if you have no friends to whom I could carry your adieux.

Charge me as heavily as you can; every burden will lighten, by so little, the invaluable gratitude I owe you. Put it in my power to do something more for you than weep."

"My mother is married again, and has a young family to care for. My brother Cuichard will inherit my fiefs; [1] and if I am not in error, that will content him amply for my death. Life is a little vapor that passeth away, as we are told by those in holy orders. When a man is in a fair way and sees all life open in front of him, he seems to himself to make a very important figure in the world. His horse whinnies to him; the trumpets blow and the girls look out of window as he rides into town before his company; he receives many assurances of trust and regard—sometimes by express in a letter—sometimes face to face, with persons of great consequence falling on his neck. It is not wonderful if his head is turned for a time. But once he is dead, were he as brave as Hercules or as wise as Solomon, he is soon forgotten. It is not ten years since my father fell, with many other knights around him, in a very fierce encounter, and I do not think that any one of them, nor so much as the name of the fight, is now remembered. No, no, madam, the nearer you come to it, you see that death is a dark and dusty corner, where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the judgment day. I have few friends just now, and once I am dead I shall have none."

"Ah, Monsieur de Beaulieu!" she exclaimed, "you forget Blanche de Malétroit."

"You have a sweet nature, madam, and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth."

"It is not that," she answered. "You mistake me if you think I am easily touched by my own concerns. I may say so, because you are the noblest man I have ever met; because I recognize in you a spirit that would have made even a common person famous in the land."

"And yet here I die in a mouse-trap—with no more noise about it than my own squeaking," answered he.

A look of pain crossed her face, and she was silent for a little while. Then a light came into her eyes, and with a smile she spoke again.

"I cannot have my champion speak meanly of himself. Anyone who gives his life for another will be met in Paradise by all the heralds and angels of the Lord God. And you have no such cause to hang your head. For . . . Pray, do you think me beautiful?" she asked, with a deep flush.

"Indeed, madam, I do," he said.

"I am glad of that," she answered heartily. "Do you think there are many men in France who have been asked in marriage by a beautiful maiden—with her own lips—and who have refused her to her face? I know you men would half despise such a triumph; but believe me, we women know more of what is precious in love. There is nothing that should set a person higher in his own esteem; and we women would prize nothing more dearly."

"You are very good," he said; "but you cannot make me forget that I was asked in pity and not for love."

"I am not so sure of that," she replied, holding down her head. "Hear me to the end, Monsieur de Beaulieu. I know how you must despise me; you are right to do so; I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind, although, alas! you must die for me this morning. But when I asked you to marry me, indeed, and indeed, it was because I respected and admired you, and loved you with my whole soul, from the very moment that you took my part against my uncle. If you had seen yourself, and how noble you looked, you would pity rather than despise me. And now," she went on, hurriedly checking him with her hand, "although I have laid aside all reserve and told you so much, remember that I know your sentiments towards me already. I would not, believe me, being nobly born, weary you with importunities into consent. I too have a pride of my own; and I declare before the holy mother of God, if you should now go back from your word already given, I would no more marry you than I would marry my uncle's groom."

Denis smiled a little bitterly.

"It is a small love," he said, "that shies at a little pride."

She made no answer, although she probably had her own thoughts.

"Come hither to the window," he said with a sigh. "Here is the dawn."

And indeed the dawn was already beginning. The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colorless and clean; and the valley underneath was flooded with

a gray reflection. A few thin vapors clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness, which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings.[1] Perhaps the same fellow who had made so horrid a clangor in the darkness not half an hour before, now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day. A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east, which was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red-hot cannon-ball, the rising sun.

Denis looked out over all this with a bit of a shiver. He had taken her hand, and retained it in his almost unconsciously.

"Has the day begun already?" she said; and then illogically enough; "the night has been so long! Alas, what shall we say to my uncle when he returns?"

"What you will," said Denis, and he pressed her fingers in his.

She was silent.

"Blanche," he said, with a swift, uncertain, passionate utterance, "you have seen whether I fear death. You must know well enough that I would as gladly leap out of that window into the empty air as to lay a finger on you without your free and full consent. But if you care for me at all, do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension; for I love you better than the whole world; and though I will die for you blithely, it

would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service."

As he stopped speaking, a bell began to ring loudly in the interior of the house; and a clatter of armor in the corridor showed that the retainers were returning to their post, and the two hours were at an end.

"After all that you have heard?" she whispered, leaning towards him with her lips and eyes.

"I have heard nothing," he replied.

"The captain's name was Florimond de Champdivers," she said in his ear.

"I did not hear it," he answered, taking her supple body in his arms, and covered her wet face with kisses.

A melodious chirping was audible behind, followed by a beautiful chuckle, and the voice of Messire de Malétroit wished his new nephew a good morning.

## FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

### The Substitute

He was scarcely ten years old when he was first arrested as a vagabond.

He spoke thus to the judge:

"I am called Jean François Leturc, and for six months I was with the man who sings and plays upon a cord of catgut between the lanterns at the Place de la Bastille. I sang the refrain with him, and after that I called, 'Here's all the new songs, ten centimes, two sous!'[1] He was always drunk and used to beat me. That is why the police picked me up the other night. Before that I was with the man who sells brushes. My mother was a laundress; her name was Adele. She was a good workwoman and liked me. She made money because she had for customers waiters in the cafés, and they use a good deal of linen. On Sundays she used to put me to bed early so that she could go to the ball. On week-days she sent me to Les Frères, where I learned to read. Well, the sergeant-de-ville[2] whose beat was in our street used always to stop before our windows to talk with her—a good-looking chap, with a medal from the Crimea.[3] They were married, and after that everything went wrong. He didn't take to me, and turned mother against me. Every one had a

blow for me, and so, to get out of the house, I spent whole days in the Place Clichy, where I knew the mountebanks. My step-father lost his place, and my mother her work. She used to go out washing to take care of him; this gave her a cough—the steam. . . . She is dead at Lamboisière. She was a good woman. Since that I have lived with the seller of brushes and the catgut scraper. Are you going to send me to prison?"

He said this openly, cynically, like a man. He was a little ragged street Arab, as tall as a boot, his forehead hidden under a queer mop of yellow hair.

Nobody claimed him, and they sent him to the Reform School.

Not very intelligent, idle, clumsy with his hands, the only trade he could learn there was not a good one—that of reseating straw chairs. However, he was obedient, naturally quiet and silent, and he did not seem to be profoundly corrupted by that school of vice. But when, in his seventeenth year, he was thrown out again on the streets of Paris, he unhappily found there his prison comrades, all great scamps, exercising their dirty professions; teaching dogs to catch rats in the sewers, and blacking boots on ball-nights in the passage of the Opera—amateur wrestlers, who permitted themselves to be thrown by the Hercules of the booths—or fishing at noontime from rafts; all of these occupations he followed to some extent, and, some months after he came out of the house of correction, he was arrested again for a petty theft—a pair of old shoes

prigged from a shopwindow. Result: a year in the prison of Sainte Pelagie, where he served as valet to the political prisoners.

He lived in much surprise among this group of prisoners, all very young, negligent in dress, who talked in loud voices, and carried their heads in a very solemn fashion. They used to meet in the cell of one of the oldest of them, a fellow of some thirty years, already a long time in prison and quite a fixture at Sainte Pelagie—a large cell, the walls covered with colored caricatures, and from the windows of which one could see all Paris—its roofs, its spires, and its domes—and far away the distant line of hills, blue and indistinct upon the sky. There were upon the walls some shelves filled with volumes and all the old paraphernalia of a fencing room; broken masks, rusty foils, breastplates, and gloves that were losing their tow. It was there that the "politicians" used to dine together, adding to the everlasting "soup and beef," fruit, cheese, and pints of wine which Jean François went and got by the can—a tumultuous repast interrupted by violent disputes, and where, during the dessert, the "*Carmagnole*" and "*Ça Ira*" were sung in full chorus. They assumed, however, an air of great dignity on those days when a newcomer was brought in among them, at first entertaining him gravely as a citizen, but on the morrow using him with affectionate familiarity, and calling him by his nickname. Great words were used there: Corporation, Responsibility, and phrases quite unintelligible to Jean François—such as this, for example,

which he once heard imperiously put forth by a frightful little hunchback who blotted some writing paper every night:

"It is done. This is the composition of the Cabinet: Raymond, the Bureau of Public Instruction; Martial, the Interior; and for Foreign Affairs, myself."

His time done, he wandered again around Paris, watched afar by the police, after the fashion of cockchafers, made by cruel children to fly at the end of a string. He became one of those fugitive and timid beings whom the law, with a sort of coquetry, arrests and releases by turn—something like those platonic fishers who, in order that they may not exhaust their fishpond, throw immediately back in the water the fish which has just come out of the net. Without a suspicion on his part that so much honor had been done to so sorry a subject, he had a special bundle of memoranda in the mysterious portfolios of the Rue de Jerusalem.[1] His name was written in round hand on the gray paper of the cover, and the notes and reports, carefully classified, gave him his successive appellations: "Name, Leturc;" "the prisoner Leturc;" and, at last, "the criminal Leturc."

He was two years out of prison, dining where he could, sleeping in night lodging houses and sometimes in lime-kilns, and taking part with his fellows in interminable games of pitch-penny on the boulevards near the barriers. He wore a greasy cap on the back of his head, carpet slippers, and a short white blouse. When he had five sous he had his hair curled. He danced at Con-

stant's at Montparnasse; bought for two sous to sell for four at the door of Bobino, the jack of hearts or the ace of clubs serving as a countermark; sometimes opened the door of a carriage; led horses to the horsemarket. From the lottery of all sorts of miserable employments he drew a goodly number. Who can say if the atmosphere of honor which one breathes as a soldier, if military discipline might not have saved him. Taken, in a cast of the net, with some young loafers who robbed drunkards sleeping on the streets, he denied very earnestly having taken part in their expeditions. Perhaps he told the truth, but his antecedents were accepted in lieu of proof, and he was sent for three years to Poissy. There he made coarse playthings for children, learned thieves' slang and the penal code. A new liberation, and a new plunge into the sink of Paris; but very short this time, for at the end of six months at the most he was again compromised in a night robbery, aggravated by climbing and breaking—a serious affair, in which he played an obscure rôle, half dupe and half fence.[1] On the whole, his complicity was evident, and he was sent for five years at hard labor. His grief in this adventure was above all in being separated from an old dog which he had found on a dung-heap, and cured of the mange. The beast loved him.

Toulon,[2] the ball and chain, the work in the harbor, the blows from a stick, wooden shoes on bare feet, soup of black beans dating from Trafalgar, no tobacco money, and the terrible sleep in a camp swarming with convicts;

that was what he experienced for five broiling summers and five winters raw with the Mediterranean wind. He came out from there stunned, was sent under surveillance to Vernon, where he worked some time on the river. Then, an incorrigible vagabond, he broke his exile and came again to Paris. He had his savings, fifty-six francs, that is to say, time enough for reflection. During his absence his former wretched companions had dispersed. He was well hidden, and slept in a loft at an old woman's, to whom he represented himself as a sailor, tired of the sea, who had lost his papers in a recent shipwreck, and who wanted to try his hand at something else. His tanned face and his calloused hands, together with some sea phrases which he dropped from time to time, made his tale seem probable enough.

One day when he risked a saunter in the streets, and when chance had led him as far as Montmartre, where he was born, an unexpected memory stopped him before the door of Les Frères, where he had learned to read. As it was very warm the door was open, and by a single glance the passing outcast was able to recognize the peaceable schoolroom. Nothing was changed; neither the bright light shining in at the great windows, nor the crucifix over the desk, nor the rows of benches with the tables furnished with inkstands and pencils, nor the table of weights and measures, nor the map where pins stuck in still indicated the operation of some ancient war. Heedlessly and without thinking, Jean François read on the blackboard the words of the Evangelist which had been set there as a copy:

"Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

It was undoubtedly the hour for recreation, for the Brother Professor had left his chair, and, sitting on the edge of a table, he was telling a story to the boys who surrounded him with eager and attentive eyes. What a bright and innocent face he had, that beardless young man, in his long black gown, and white necktie, and great ugly shoes, and his badly cut brown hair streaming out behind! All the simple figures of the children of the people who were watching him seemed scarcely less childlike than his; above all when, delighted with some of his own simple and priestly pleasantries, he broke out in an open and frank peal of laughter which showed his white and regular teeth, a peal so contagious that all the scholars laughed loudly in their turn. It was such a sweet, simple group in the bright sunlight, which lighted their dear eyes and their blond curls.

Jean François looked at them for some time in silence, and for the first time in that savage nature, all instinct and appetite, there awoke a mysterious, a tender emotion. His heart, that seared and hardened heart, unmoved when the convict's cudgel or the heavy whip of the watchman fell on his shoulders, beat oppressively. In that sight he saw again his infancy; and closing his eyes sadly, the prey to torturing regret, he walked quickly away.

Then the words written on the blackboard came back to his mind.

"If it wasn't too late, after all!" he murmured; "if I could again, like others, eat honestly my brown bread, and sleep my fill without nightmare! The spy must be sharp who recognizes me. My beard, which I shaved off down there, has grown out thick and strong. One can burrow somewhere in the great ant hill, and work can be found. Whoever is not worked to death in the hell of the galleys comes out agile and robust, and I learned there to climb ropes with loads on my back. Building is going on everywhere here, and the masons need helpers. Three francs a day! I never earned so much. Let me be forgotten and that is all I ask."

He followed his courageous resolution; he was faithful to it, and after three months he was another man. The master for whom he worked called him his best workman. After a long day upon the scaffolding, in the hot sun and the dust, constantly bending and raising his back to take the hod from the man at his feet and pass it to the man over his head, he went for his soup to the cookshop, his eyelids stuck with plaster, but content with himself, and carrying his well-earned money in a knot in his handkerchief. He went out now without fear, since he could not be recognized in his white mask, and since he had noticed that the suspicious glances of the policeman were seldom turned on the tired workman. He was quiet and sober. He slept the sound sleep of fatigue. He was free!

At last—oh, supreme recompense!—he had a friend!

He was a fellow-workman like himself, named Savinien, a little peasant with red lips who had come

to Paris with his stick over his shoulder and a bundle on the end of it, fleeing from the wine shops and going to mass every Sunday. Jean François loved him for his piety, for his candor, for his honesty, for all that he himself had lost, and so long ago. It was a passion, profound and unrestrained, which transformed him by fatherly cares and attentions. Savinien, himself of a weak and egotistical nature, let things take their course, satisfied only in finding a companion who shared his horror of the wine shop. The two friends lived together in a fairly comfortable lodging, but their resources were very limited. They were obliged to take into their room a third companion, an old Auvergnat, gloomy and rapacious, who found it possible out of his meagre salary to save something with which to buy a place in his own country. Jean François and Savinien were always together. On holidays they together took long walks in the environs of Paris, and dined under an arbor in one of those small country inns where there are a great many mushrooms in the sauces and innocent rebusses on the napkins. There Jean François learned from his friend all that lore of which they who are born in the city are ignorant; learned the names of the trees, the flowers, and the plants; the various seasons for harvesting; he heard eagerly the thousand details of a laborious country life—the autumn sowing, the winter chores, the splendid celebrations of harvest and vintage days, the sound of the mills at the waterside, and the flails striking the ground, the tired horses led to water, and the hunting in the morning mist; and, above all,

the long evenings around the fire of vine-shoots, that were shortened by some marvellous stories. He discovered in himself a source of imagination before unknown, and found a singular delight in the recital of events so placid, so calm, so monotonous.

One thing troubled him, however; it was the fear lest Savinien might learn something of his past. Sometimes there escaped from him some low word of thieves' slang, a vulgar gesture—vestiges of his former horrible existence—and he felt the pain one feels when old wounds re-open; the more because he fancied that he sometimes saw in Savinien the awakening of an unhealthy curiosity. When the young man, already tempted by the pleasures which Paris offers to the poorest, asked him about the mysteries of the great city, Jean François feigned ignorance and turned the subject; but he felt a vague inquietude for the future of his friend.

His uneasiness was not without foundation. Savinien could not long remain the simple rustic that he was on his arrival in Paris. If the gross and noisy pleasures of the wine shop always repelled him, he was profoundly troubled by other temptations, full of danger for the inexperience of his twenty years. He became more frivolous, more extravagant. He often borrowed from his friend his scanty savings, and he forgot to repay. Jean François, feeling that he was abandoned, jealous and forgiving at the same time, suffered and was silent. He felt that he had no right to reproach him, but with the foresight of affection he indulged in cruel and inevitable presentiments.

One evening, as he was mounting the stairs to his room, absorbed in his thoughts, he heard, as he was about to enter, the sound of angry voices, and he recognized that of the old Auvergnat who lodged with Savinien and himself. An old habit of suspicion made him stop at the landing-place and listen to learn the cause of the trouble.

"Yes," said the Auvergnat, angrily, "I am sure that some one has opened my trunk and stolen from it the three louis that I had hidden in a little box; and he who has done this thing must be one of the two companions who sleep here, if it were not the servant Maria. It concerns you as much as it does me, since you are the master of the house, and I will drag you to the courts if you do not let me at once break open the valises of the two masons. My poor gold! It was here yesterday in its place, and I will tell you just what it was, so that if we find it again nobody can accuse me of having lied. Ah, I know them, my three beautiful gold pieces, and I can see them as plainly as I see you! One piece was more worn than the others; it was of greenish gold, with a portrait of the great emperor. The other was a great old fellow with a queue and epaulettes; and the third, which had on it a Philippe with whiskers, I had marked with my teeth. They don't trick me. Do you know that I only wanted two more like that to pay for my vineyard? Come, search these fellows' things with me, or I will call the police! Hurry up!"

"All right," said the voice of the landlord; "we will go and search with Maria. So much the worse for you

if we find nothing, and the masons get angry. You have forced me to it."

Jean François' soul was full of fright. He remembered the embarrassed circumstances and the small loans of Savinien, and how sober he had seemed for some days. And yet he could not believe that he was a thief. He heard the Auvergnat panting in his eager search, and he pressed his closed fists against his breast as if to still the furious beating of his heart.

"Here they are!" suddenly shouted the victorious miser. "Here they are, my louis, my dear treasure; and in the Sunday vest of that little hypocrite of Limousin! Look, landlord, they are just as I told you. Here is the Napoleon, the man with a queue, and the Philippe that I have bitten. See the dents! Ah, the little beggar with the sanctified air. I should have much sooner suspected the other. Ah, the wretch! Well, he must go to the convict prison."

At this moment François heard the well-known step of Savinien coming slowly up the stairs.

"He is going to his destruction," thought he. "Three stories. I have time!"

And pushing open the door, pale as death, he entered the room, where he saw the landlord and the servant stupefied in a corner, while the Auvergnat, on his knees, in the disordered heap of clothes, was kissing the pieces of gold.

"Enough of this," he said, in a thick voice; "I took the money, and put it in my comrade's trunk. But that is too bad. I am a thief, but not a Judas. Call

the police; I will not try to escape, only I must say a word to Savinien in private. Here he is."

In fact, the Limousin had just arrived, and seeing his crime discovered, believing himself lost, he stood there, his eyes fixed, his arms hanging.

Jean François seized him forcibly by the neck, as if to embrace him; he put his mouth to Savinien's ear, and said to him in a low, supplicating voice:

"Keep quiet."

Then turning towards the others:

"Leave me alone with him. I tell you I won't go away. Lock us in if you wish, but leave us alone."

With a commanding gesture he showed them the door. They went out.

Savinien, broken by grief, was sitting on the bed, and lowered his eyes without understanding anything.

"Listen," said Jean François, who came and took him by the hands. "I understand! You have stolen three gold pieces to buy some trifle for a girl. That costs six months in prison. But one only comes out from there to go back again, and you will become a pillar of police courts and tribunals. I understand it. I have been seven years at the Reform School, a year at Sainte Pelagie, three years at Poissy, five years at Toulon. Now, don't be afraid. Everything is arranged. I have taken it on my shoulders."

"It is dreadful," said Savinien; but hope was springing up again in his cowardly heart.

"When the elder brother is under the flag, the younger one does not go," replied Jean François.

"I am your substitute, that's all. You care for me a little, do you not? I am paid. Don't be childish—don't refuse. They would have taken me again one of these days, for I am a runaway from exile. And then, do you see, that life will be less hard for me than for you. I know it all, and I shall not complain if I have not done you this service for nothing, and if you swear to me that you will never do it again. Savinien, I have loved you well, and your friendship has made me happy. It is through it that, since I have known you, I have been honest and pure, as I might always have been, perhaps, if I had had, like you, a mother to teach me my prayers. It was my sole regret that I was useless to you, and that I deceived you concerning myself. To-day I have unmasked in saving you. It is all right. Do not cry, and embrace me, for already I hear heavy boots on the stairs. They are coming with the *posse*, and we must not seem to know each other so well before those chaps."

He pressed Savinien quickly to his breast, then pushed him from him, when the door was thrown wide open.

It was the landlord and the Auvergnat, who brought the police. Jean François sprang forward to the landing place, held out his hands for the handcuffs, and said, laughing, "Forward, bad lot!"

To-day he is at Cayenne, condemned for life as an incorrigible.

## HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

### The Cumbersome Horse

It is not to be denied that a sense of disappointment pervaded Mr. Brimmington's being in the hour of his first acquaintance with the isolated farmhouse which he had just purchased, sight unseen, after long epistolary negotiations with Mr. Hiram Skinner, postmaster, carpenter, teamster, and real estate agent of Bethel Corners, who was now driving him to his new domain.

Perhaps the feeling was of a mixed origin. Indian summer was much colder up in the Pennsylvania hills than he had expected to find it; and the hills themselves were much larger and bleaker and barer, and far more indifferent in their demeanor toward him, than he had expected to find them. Then Mr. Skinner had been something of a disappointment himself. He was too familiar with his big, knobby, red hands; too furtive with his small, close-set eyes; too profuse of tobacco juice, and too raspingly loquacious. And certainly the house itself did not meet his expectations when he first saw it, standing lonely and desolate in its ragged meadows of stubble and wild grass on the unpleasantly steep mountainside.

And yet Mr Skinner had accomplished for him the

desire of his heart. He had always said that when he should come into his money—forty thousand dollars from a maiden aunt—he would quit forever his toilsome job of preparing Young Gentlemen for admission to the Larger Colleges and Universities, and would devote the next few years to writing his long-projected "History of Prehistoric Man." And to go about this task he had always said that he would go and live in perfect solitude—that is, all by himself and a chore-woman—in a secluded farmhouse, situated upon the southerly slope of some high hill—an old farmhouse—a Revolutionary farmhouse, if possible—a delightful, long, low, rambling farmhouse—a farmhouse with floors of various levels—a farmhouse with crooked stairs, and with nooks and corners and quaint cupboards—this—this had been the desire of Mr. Brimmington's heart.

Mr. Brimmington, when he came into his money at the age of forty-five, fixed on Pike County, Pennsylvania, as a mountainous country of good report. A postal guide informed him that Mr. Skinner was the postmaster of Bethel Corners; so Mr. Brimmington wrote to Mr. Skinner.

The correspondence between Mr. Brimmington and Mr. Skinner was long enough and full enough to have settled a treaty between two nations. It ended by a discovery of a house lonely enough and aged enough to fill the bill. Several hundred dollars' worth of repairs were needed to make it habitable, and Mr. Skinner was employed to make them. Toward the close of a

cold November day, Mr. Brimmington saw his purchase for the first time.

In spite of his disappointment, he had to admit, as he walked around the place in the early twilight, that it was just what he had bargained for. The situation, the dimensions, the exposure, were all exactly what had been stipulated. About its age there could be no question. Internally, its irregularity—indeed, its utter failure to conform to any known rules of domestic architecture—surpassed Mr. Brimmington's wildest expectations. It had stairs eighteen inches wide; it had rooms of strange shapes and sizes; it had strange, shallow cupboards in strange places; it had no hallway; its windows were of odd design, and whoso wanted variety in floors could find it there. And along the main wall of Mr. Brimmington's study there ran a structure some three feet and a half high and nearly as deep, which Mr. Skinner confidently assured him was used in old times as a wall-bench or a dresser, indifferently. "You might think," said Mr. Skinner, "that all that space inside there was jest wasted; but it ain't so. Them seats is jest filled up inside with braces so's that you can set on them good and solid." And then Mr. Skinner proudly called attention to the two coats of gray paint spread over the entire side of the house, walls, ceilings, and woodwork, blending the original portions and the Skinner restorations in one harmonious, homogeneous whole.

Mr. Skinner might have told him that this variety of gray paint is highly popular in some rural districts,

and is made by mixing lampblack and ball-blue with a low grade of white lead. But he did not say it; and he drove away as soon as he conveniently could, after formally introducing him to Mrs. Sparhawk, a gaunt, stern-faced, silent, elderly woman. Mrs. Sparhawk was to take charge of his bachelor establishment during the daytime. Mrs. Sparhawk cooked him a meal for which she very properly apologized. Then she returned to her kitchen to "clean up." Mr. Brimmington went to the front door, partly to look out upon his property, and partly to turn his back on the gray paint. There were no steps before the front door, but a newly-graded mound or earthwork about the size of a half-hogshead. He looked out upon his apple orchard, which was farther away than he had expected to find it. It had been out of bearing for ten years, but this Mr. Brimmington did not know. He did know, however, that the whole outlook was distinctly dreary.

As he stood there and gazed out into the twilight, two forms suddenly approached him. Around one corner of the house came Mrs. Sparhawk on her way home. Around the other came an immensely tall, whitish shape, lumbering forward with a heavy tread. Before he knew it, it had scrambled up the side of his mound with a clumsy, ponderous rush, and was thrusting itself directly upon him when he uttered so lusty a cry of dismay that it fell back startled; and wheeling about a great long body that swayed on four misshapen legs, it pounded off in the direction it had come from, and disappeared around the corner. Mr. Brim-

mington turned to Mrs. Sparhawk in disquiet and indignation.

"Mrs. Sparhawk," he demanded; "what is that?"

"It's a horse," said Mrs. Sparhawk, not at all surprised, for she knew that Mr. Brimmington was from the city. "They hitch 'em to wagons here."

"I know it is a horse, Mrs. Sparhawk," Mr. Brimmington rejoined with some asperity; "but whose horse is it, and what is it doing on my premises?"

"I don't rightly know whose horse it *is*," replied Mrs. Sparhawk; "the man that used to own it, he's dead now."

"But what," inquired Mr. Brimmington sternly, "is the animal doing here?"

"I guess he b'longs here," Mrs. Sparhawk said. She had a cold, even, impersonal way of speaking, as though she felt that her safest course in life was to confine herself strictly to such statements of fact as might be absolutely required of her.

"But, my good woman, ' replied Mr. Brimmington, in bewilderment, "how can that be? The animal can't certainly belong on my property unless he belongs to me, and that animal certainly is not mine."

Seeing him so much at a loss and so greatly disturbed in mind, Mrs. Sparhawk relented a little from her strict rule of life, and made an attempt at explanation.

"He b'longed to the man who owned this place first off; and I don't know for sure, but I've heard tell that *he* fixed it some way so's that the horse would sort of go with the place."

Mr. Brimmington felt irritation rising within him.

"But," he said, "it's preposterous! There was no such consideration in the deed. No such thing can be done, Mrs. Sparhawk, without my acquiescence!"

"I don't know nothin' about that," said Mrs. Sparhawk; "what I do know is, the place has changed hands often enough since, and the horse has always went with the place."

There was an unsettled suggestion in the first part of this statement of Mrs. Sparhawk that gave a shock to Mr. Brimmington's nerves. He laughed uneasily.

"Oh, er, yes! I see. Very probably there's been some understanding. I suppose I am to regard the horse as a sort of lien upon the place—a—a—what do they call it?—an incumbrance! Yes," he repeated, more to himself than to Mrs. Sparhawk; "an incumbrance. I've got a gentleman's country place with a horse incumbrant."

Mrs. Sparhawk heard him, however.

"It *is* a sorter cumbersome horse," she said. And without another word she gathered her shawl about her shoulders, and strode off into the darkness.

Mr. Brimmington turned back into the house, and busied himself with a vain attempt to make his long-cherished furniture look at home in his new leaden-hued rooms. The ungrateful task gave him the blues; and after an hour of it, he went to bed.

He was dreaming leaden-hued dreams, oppressed, uncomfortable dreams, when a peculiarly weird and uncanny series of thumps on the front of the house awoke

him with a start. The thumps might have been made by a giant with a weaver's beam, but he must have been a very drunken giant to group his thumps in such a disorderly parody of time and sequence.

Mr. Brimmington had too guileless and clean a heart to be the prey of undefined terrors. He rose, ran to the window, and opened it. The moonlight lit up the raw, frosty landscape with a cold, pale, diffused radiance, and Mr. Brimmington could plainly see right below him the cumbersome horse, cumbersomely trying to maintain a footing on the top of the little mound before the front door. When, for a fleeting instant, he seemed to think that he had succeeded in this feat, he tried to bolt through the door. As soon, however, as one of his huge knees smote the panel, his hind feet lost their grip on the soft earth, and he wabbled back down the incline, where he stood shaking and quivering, until he could muster wind enough for another attempt to make a catapult of himself. The veil-like illumination of the night, which turned all things else to a dim silvery gray, could not hide the scars and bruises and worn places that spotted the animal's great, gaunt, distorted frame. His knees were as big as a man's head. His feet were enormous. His joints stood out from his shriveled carcass like so many pine knots. Mr. Brimmington gazed at him, fascinated, horrified, until a rush more desperate and uncertain than the rest threatened to break his front door in.

"Hi!" shrieked Mr. Brimmington; "go away!"

It was the horse's turn to get frightened. He lifted

his long, coffin-shaped head toward Mr. Brimmington's window, cast a sort of blind, cross-eyed, ineffectual glance at him, and with a long-drawn, wheezing, cough-choked whinny he backed down the mound, got himself about, end for end, with such extreme awkwardness that he hurt one poor knee on a hitching-post that looked to be ten feet out of his way, and limped off to the rear of the house.

The sound of that awful, rusty, wind-broken whinny haunted Mr. Brimmington all the rest of that night. It was like the sound of an orchestrion run down, or of a man who is utterly tired of the whooping-cough and doesn't care who knows it.

The next morning was bright and sunshiny, and Mr. Brimmington awoke in a more cheerful frame of mind than he would naturally have expected to find himself in after his perturbed night. He found himself inclined to make the best of his purchase and to view it in as favorable a light as possible. He went outside and looked at it from various points of view, trying to find and if possible to dispose of the reason for the vague sense of disappointment which he felt, having come into possession of the rambling old farmhouse, which he had so much desired.

He decided, after a long and careful inspection, that it was the *proportions* of the house that were wrong. They were certainly peculiar. It was singularly high between joints in the first story, and singularly low in the second. In spite of its irregularity within, it was uncompromisingly square on the outside. There was

something queer about the pitch of its roof, and it seemed strange that so modest a structure with no hallway whatever should have vestibule windows on each side of its doors, both front and rear.

But here an idea flashed into Mr. Brimmington's mind that in an instant changed him from a carping critic to a delighted discoverer. He was living in a Block House! Yes; that explained—that accounted for all the strangeness of its architecture. In an instant he found his purchase invested with a beautiful glamor of adventurous association. Here was the stout and well-planned refuge to which the grave settlers of an earlier day had fled to guard themselves against the attack of the vindictive redskins. He saw it all. A moat, crossed no doubt by drawbridges, had surrounded the building. In the main room below, the women and children had huddled while their courageous defenders had poured a leaden hail upon the foe through loopholes in the upper story. He walked around the house for some time, looking for loopholes.

So pleased was Mr. Brimmington at his theory that the morning passed rapidly away, and when he looked at his watch he was surprised to find that it was nearly noon. Then he remembered that Mr. Skinner had promised to call on him at eleven, to make anything right that was not right. Glancing over the landscape, he saw Mr. Skinner approaching by a circuitous track. He was apparently following the course of a snake fence which he could readily have climbed. This seemed strange, as his way across the pasture land was

seemingly unimpeded. Thinking of the pasture land made Mr. Brimmington think of the white horse, and casting his eyes a little farther down the hill he saw that animal slowly and painfully steering a parallel course to Mr. Skinner, on the other side of the fence. Mr. Skinner went out of sight behind a clump of trees, and when he arrived it was not upon the side of the house where Mr. Brimmington had expected to see him appear.

As they were about to enter the house, Mr. Brimmington noticed the marks of last night's attack upon his front door, and he spoke to Mr. Skinner about the horse.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Skinner, with much ingenuousness; "that horse. I was meaning to speak to you about that horse. Fact is, I've kinder got that horse on my hands, and if it's no inconvenience to you, I'd like to leave him where he is for a little while."

"But it would be very inconvenient, indeed, Mr. Skinner," said the new owner of the house. "The animal is a very unpleasant object; and, moreover, it attempted to break into my front door last night."

Mr. Skinner's face darkened. "Sho!" he said; "you don't mean to tell me that?"

But Mr. Brimmington did mean to tell him that, and Mr. Skinner listened with a scowl of unconcealed perplexity and annoyance. He bit his lip reflectively for a minute or two before he spoke.

"Too bad you was disturbed," he said at length. "You'll have to keep the bars up to that meadow and then it won't happen again."

"But, indeed, it must not happen again," said Mr. Brimmington; "the horse must be taken away."

"Well, you see it's this way, friend," returned Mr. Skinner, with a rather ugly air of decision; "I really ain't got no choice in the matter. I'd like to oblige you, and if I'd known as far back that you would have objected to the animal I'd have had him took somewheres. But, as it is, there ain't no such a thing as getting that there horse off this here place till the frost's out of the ground. You can see for yourself that that horse, the condition he's in now, couldn't no more go up nor down this hill than he could fly. Why, I came over here a-foot this morning on purpose not to take them horses of mine over this road again. It can't be done, sir."

"Very well," suggested Mr. Brimmington; "kill the horse."

"I ain't killing no horses," said Mr. Skinner. "You may if you like; but I'd advise you not to. There's them as mightn't like it."

"Well, let them come and take their horse away, then," said Mr. Brimmington.

"Just so," assented Mr. Skinner. "It's they who are concerned in the horse, and they have a right to take him away. I would if I was any ways concerned, but I ain't." Here he turned suddenly upon Mr. Brimmington. "Why, look here," he said, "you ain't got the heart to turn that there horse out of that there pasture where he's been for fifteen years. It won't do you no sorter hurt to have him stay there till spring.

Put the bars up, and he won't trouble you no more."

"But," objected Mr. Brimmington, weakly, "even if the poor creature were not so unsightly, he could not be left alone all winter in that pasture without shelter."

"That's just where you're mistaken," Mr. Skinner replied, tapping his interlocutor heavily upon the shoulder; "he don't mind it not one mite. See that shed there?" And he pointed to a few wind-racked boards in the corner of the lot. "There's hoss-shelter; and as for food, why's there's feed enough in that meadow for two such as him."

In the end Mr. Brimmington, being utterly ignorant of the nature and needs of horseflesh, was overpersuaded, and he consented to let the unfortunate white horse remain in his pasture lot to be the sport of the winter's chill and bitter cruelty. Then he and Mr. Skinner talked about some new paint.

It was the dead waste and middle of Mr. Brimmington's third night in his new house, when he was absolutely knocked out of a calm and peaceful slumber by a crash so appalling that he at first thought that the side of the mountain had slidden down upon his dwelling. This was followed by other crashes, thumps, the tearing of woodwork and various strange and gruesome noises. Whatever it might be, Mr. Brimmington felt certain that it was no secret midnight marauder, and he hastened to the eighteen-inch stairway without even waiting to put on a dressing-gown. A rush of

cold air came up from below, and he had no choice but to scuttle back for a bathrobe and a candle while the noises continued, and the cold air floated all over the house.

There was no difficulty in locating the sounds. Mr. Brimmington presented himself at the door of the little kitchen, pulled it open, and raising the light above his head, looked in. The rush of wind blew out his light, but not before he had had time to see that it was the white horse that was in the kitchen, and that he had gone through the floor.

Subsequent investigation proved that the horse had come in through the back door, carrying that and its two vestibule windows with him, and that he had at first trampled and then churned the thin floor into matchwood. He was now reposing on his stomach, with his legs hanging down between the joists into the hollow under the house—for there was no cellar. He looked over his shoulder at his host and emitted his blood-curdling wail.

"My gracious!" said Mr. Brimmington.

That night Mr. Brimmington sat up with the horse, both of them wrapped, as well as Mr. Brimmington could do it, in bedclothes. There is not much you can do with a horse under such circumstances. The thought crossed Mr. Brimmington's mind of reading to him, but he dismissed it.

In the interview the next day, between Mr. Brimmington and Mr. Skinner, the aggressiveness was all

on Mr. Brimmington's side, and Mr. Skinner was meek and wore an anxious expression. Mr. Brimmington had, however, changed his point of view. He now realized that sleeping out of winter nights might be unpleasant, even painful to an aged and rheumatic horse. And although he had cause of legitimate complaint against the creature, he could no longer bear to think of killing the animal with whom he had shared that cold and silent vigil. He commissioned Mr. Skinner to build for the brute a small but commodious lodging, and to provide a proper stock of provender—commissions which Mr. Skinner gladly and humbly accepted. As to the undertaking to get the horse out of his immediate predicament, however, Mr. Skinner absolutely refused to touch the job. "That horse don't like me," said Mr. Skinner; "I know he don't; I seen it in his eyes long ago. If you like, I'll send you two or three men and a block-and-tackle, and they can get him out; but not me; no sir."

Mr. Skinner devoted that day to repairing damages, and promised on the morrow to begin the building of the little barn. Mr. Brimmington was glad there was going to be no greater delay, when, early in the evening, the sociable white horse tried to put his front feet through the study window.

But of all the noises that startled Mr. Brimmington, in the first week of his sojourn in the farmhouse, the most alarming awakened him about eight o'clock of the following morning. Hurrying to his study, he gazed in wonder upon a scene unparalleled even in the

History of Prehistoric Man. The boards had been ripped off the curious structure which was supposed to have served the hardy settlers for a wall-bench and a dresser indifferently. This revealed another structure in the form of a long crib or bin, within which, apparently trying to back out through the wall, stood Mr. Skinner, holding his tool-box in front of him as if to shield himself, and fairly yelping with terror. The front door was off its hinges, and there stood Mrs. Sparhawk wielding a broom to keep out the white horse, who was viciously trying to force an entrance. Mr. Brimmington asked what it all meant; and Mrs. Sparhawk, turning a vicious face upon him, spoke with the vigor of a woman who has kept silence too long.

"It means," she said, "that this here house of yours is this here horse's stable; *and the horse knows it.* This here horse was old Colonel Josh Pineus's regimental horse, and this here man Skinner was to have the caring of him until he should die a natural death, and then he was to have this stable; and till then the stable was left to the horse. And now he's taken the stable away from the horse, and patched it up into a dwelling house for a fool from New York City; and the horse don't like it; and the horse don't like Skinner. And when he come back to git that manger for your barn, the horse sot onto him. And that's what's the matter, Mr. Skimmerton."

"Mrs. Sparhawk," began Mr. Brimmington—

"I *ain't* no Sparhawk!" fairly shouted the enraged woman, as with a furious shove she sent the Cumber-

some Horse staggering down the doorway mound; "this here's Hiram Skinner, the meanest man in Pike's County, and I'm his wife, let out to do day's work! You've had one week of him—how would you have liked twenty years?"

## O. HENRY

### A Chaparral [1] Christmas Gift

The original cause of the trouble was about twenty years in growing.

At the end of the time it was worth it.

Had you lived anywhere within fifty miles of Sundown Ranch you would have heard of it. It possessed a quantity of jet-black hair, a pair of extremely frank, deep-brown eyes and a laugh that rippled across the prairie like the sound of a hidden brook. The name of it was Rosita McMullen; and she was the daughter of old man McMullen of the Sundown Sheep Ranch.

There came riding on red roan steeds—or, to be more explicit, on a paint and a flea-bitten sorrel—two wooers. One was Madison Lane, and the other was the Frio Kid. But at that time they did not call him the Frio Kid, for he had not earned the honors of special nomenclature. His name was simply Johnny McRoy.

It must not be supposed that these two were the sum of the agreeable Rosita's admirers. The bronchos of a dozen others champed their bits at the long hitching rack of the Sundown Ranch. Many were the sheeps'-eyes that were cast in those savannas that did not belong to the flocks of Dan McMullen. But of all the

cavaliers, Madison Lane and Johnny McRoy galloped far ahead, wherefore they are to be chronicled.

Madison Lane, a young cattleman from the Nueces country, won the race. He and Rosita were married one Christmas day. Armed, hilarious, vociferous, magnanimous, the cowmen and the sheepmen, laying aside their hereditary hatred, joined forces to celebrate the occasion.

Sundown Ranch was sonorous with the cracking of jokes and six-shooters, the shine of buckles and bright eyes, the outspoken congratulations of the herders of kine.

But while the wedding feast was at its liveliest there descended upon it Johnny McRoy, bitten by jealousy, like one possessed.

"I'll give you a Christmas present," he yelled, shrilly, at the door, with his .45 in his hand. Even then he had some reputation as an offhand shot.

His first bullet cut a neat underbit in Madison Lane's right ear. The barrel of his gun moved an inch. The next shot would have been the bride's had not Carson, a sheepman, possessed a mind with triggers somewhat well oiled and in repair. The guns of the wedding party had been hung, in their belts, upon nails in the wall when they sat at table, as a concession to good taste. But Carson, with great promptness, hurled his plate of roast venison and frijoles at McRoy, spoiling his aim. The second bullet, then, only shattered the white petals of a Spanish dagger flower suspended two feet above Rosita's head.

The guests spurned their chairs and jumped for their weapons. It was considered an improper act to shoot the bride and groom at a wedding. In about six seconds there were twenty or so bullets due to be whizzing in the direction of Mr. McRoy.

"I'll shoot better next time," yelled Johnny; "and there'll be a next time." He backed rapidly out the door.

Carson, the sheepman, spurred on to attempt further exploits by the success of his plate-throwing, was first to reach the door. McRoy's bullet from the darkness laid him low.

The cattlemen then swept out upon him, calling for vengeance, for, while the slaughter of a sheepman has not always lacked condonement, it was a decided misdemeanor in this instance. Carson was innocent; he was no accomplice at the matrimonial proceedings; nor had any one heard him quote the line "Christmas comes but once a year" to the guests.

But the sortie failed in its vengeance. McRoy was on his horse and away, shouting back curses and threats as he galloped into the concealing chaparral.

That night was the birthnight of the Frio Kid. He became the "bad man" of that portion of the state. The rejection of his suit by Miss McMullen turned him to a dangerous man. When officers went after him for the shooting of Carson, he killed two of them, and entered upon the life of an outlaw. He became a marvellous shot with either hand. He would turn up in towns and settlements, raise a quarrel at the slightest

opportunity, pick off his man and laugh at the officers of the law. He was so cool, so deadly, so rapid, so inhumanly bloodthirsty that none but faint attempts were ever made to capture him. When he was at last shot and killed by a little one-armed Mexican, who was nearly dead himself from fright, the Frio Kid had the deaths of eighteen men on his head. About half of these were killed in fair duels depending upon the quickness of the draw. The other half were men whom he assassinated from absolute wantonness and cruelty.

Many tales are told along the border of his impudent courage and daring. But he was not one of the breed of desperadoes who have seasons of generosity and even of softness. They say he never had mercy on the object of his anger. Yet at this and every Christmastide it is well to give each one credit, if it can be done, for whatever speck of good he may have possessed. If the Frio Kid ever did a kindly act or felt a throb of generosity in his heart it was once at such a time and season, and this is the way it happened.

One who has been crossed in love should never breathe the odor from the blossoms of the ratama tree. It stirs the memory to a dangerous degree.

One December in the Frio country there was a ratama tree in full bloom, for the winter had been as warm as springtime. That way rode the Frio Kid and his satellite and co-murderer, Mexican Frank. The Kid reined in his mustang, and sat in his saddle, thoughtful and grim, with dangerously narrowing eyes. The

rich, sweet scent touched him somewhere beneath his ice and iron.

"I don't know what I've been thinking about, Mex," he remarked in his usual mild drawl, "to have forgot all about a Christmas present I got to give. I'm going to ride over to-morrow night and shoot Madison Lane in his own house. He got my girl—Rosita would have had me if he hadn't cut into the game. I wonder why I happened to overlook it up to now?"

"Ah, shucks, Kid," said Mexican, "don't talk foolishness. You know you can't get within a mile of Mad Lane's house to-morrow night. I see old man Allen day before yesterday and, he says Mad is going to have Christmas doings at his house. You remember how you shot up the festivities when Mad was married, and about the threats you made? Don't you suppose Mad Lane'll kind of keep his eye open for a certain Mr. Kid? You plumb make me tired, Kid, with such remarks."

"I'm going," repeated the Frio Kid, without heat, "to go to Madison Lane's Christmas doings, and kill him. I ought to have done it a long time ago. Why, Mex, just two weeks ago I dreamed me and Rosita was married instead of her and him; and we was living in a house, and I could see her smiling at me, and—oh! h—l, Mex, he got her; and I'll get him—yes, sir, on Christmas Eve he got her, and then's when I'll get him."

"There's other ways of committing suicide," advised Mexican. "Why don't you go and surrender to the sheriff?"

"I'll get him," said the Kid.

Christmas Eve fell as balmy as April. Perhaps there was a hint of far-away frostiness in the air, but it tingled like seltzer, perfumed faintly with late prairie blossoms and the mesquite grass.

When night came the five or six rooms of the ranch-house were brightly lit. In one room was a Christmas tree, for the Lanes had a boy of three, and a dozen or more guests were expected from the nearer ranches.

At nightfall Madison Lane called aside Jim Belcher and three other cowboys employed on his ranch.

"Now, boys," said Lane, "keep your eyes open. Walk around the house and watch the road well. All of you know the Frio Kid, as they call him now, and if you see him, open fire on him without asking any questions. I'm not afraid of his coming around, but Rosita is. She's been afraid he'd come in on us every Christmas since we were married."

The guests had arrived in buckboards and on horseback, and were making themselves comfortable inside.

The evening went along pleasantly. The guests enjoyed and praised Rosita's excellent supper, and afterward the men scattered in groups about the rooms or on the broad gallery, smoking and chatting.

The Christmas tree, of course, delighted the youngsters, and above all were they pleased when Santa Claus himself in magnificent white beard and furs appeared and began to distribute the toys.

"It's my papa," announced Billy Sampson, aged six. "I've seen him wear 'em before."

Berkly, a sheepman, an old friend of Lane, stopped Rosita as she was passing by him on the gallery, where he was sitting smoking.

"Well, Mrs. Lane," said he, "I suppose by this Christmas you've gotten over being afraid of that fellow McRoy, haven't you? Madison and I have talked about it, you know."

"Very nearly," said Rosita, smiling, "but I am still nervous sometimes. I shall never forget that awful time when he came so near to killing us."

"He's the most cold-hearted villain in the world," said Berkly. "The citizens all along the border ought to turn out and hunt him down like a wolf."

"He has committed awful crimes," said Rosita, "but—I—don't—know. I think there is a spot of good somewhere in everybody. He was not always bad—that I know."

Rosita turned into the hallway between the rooms. Santa Claus, in muffling whiskers and furs, was just coming through.

"I heard what you said through the window, Mrs. Lane," he said. "I was just going down in my pocket for a Christmas present for your husband. But I've left one for you instead. It's in the room to your right."

"Oh, thank you, kind Santa Claus," said Rosita, brightly.

Rosita went into the room, while Santa Claus stepped into the cooler air of the yard.

She found no one in the room but Madison.

"Where is my present that Santa said he left for me in here?" she asked.

"Haven't seen anything in the way of a present," said her husband laughing, "unless he could have meant me."

The next day Gabriel Radd, the foreman of the X. O. Ranch, dropped into the post-office at Loma Alta.

"Well, the Frio Kid's got his dose of lead at last," he remarked to the postmaster.

"That so? How'd it happen?"

"One of old Sanchez's Mexican sheep herders did it!—think of it! the Frio Kid killed by a sheep herder! The Greaser saw him riding along past his camp about twelve o'clock last night, and was so skeered that he up with a Winchester and let him have it. Funniest part of it was that the Kid was dressed all up with white Angora-skin whiskers and a regular Santy Claus rig-out from head to foot. Think of the Frio Kid playing Santy!"

## GUY DE MAUPASSANT

### That Costly Ride

The household lived frugally on the meagre income derived from the husband's insignificant appointments. Two children had been born of the marriage, and the earlier condition of the strictest economy had become one of quiet, concealed, shamefaced misery; the poverty of a noble family which in spite of misfortune never forgets its rank.

Hector de Gribelin had been educated in the provinces, under the paternal roof, by an aged priest. His people were not rich, but they managed somehow to live and to keep up appearances.

At twenty years of age they tried to find him a position, and he entered the Ministry of Marine as a clerk at sixty pounds a year. He foundered on the rock of life like all those who have not been early prepared for its rude struggles, who look at life through a mist, who do not know how to protect themselves, whose special aptitudes and faculties have not been developed from childhood, whose early training has not developed the rough energy needed for the battle of life or furnished them with tool or weapon.

His first three years of office work were a martyrdom.

He had, however, renewed the acquaintance of a few friends of his family—elderly people, far behind the times, and poor like himself, who lived in aristocratic streets, the gloomy thoroughfares of the Faubourg Saint-Germain; and he had created a social circle for himself.

Strangers to modern life, humble yet proud, these needy aristocrats lived in the upper stories of sleepy, old-world houses. From top to bottom of their dwellings the tenants were titled, but money seemed just as scarce on the ground floor as in the attics.

Their eternal prejudices, absorption in their rank, anxiety lest they should lose caste, filled the minds and thoughts of these families once so brilliant, now ruined by the idleness of the men of the family. Hector de Gribelin met in this circle a young girl as well born and as poor as himself, and married her.

They had two children in four years.

For four years more the husband and wife, harassed by poverty, knew no other distraction than the Sunday walk in the Champs Elysées, and a few evenings at the theater (amounting in all to one or two in the course of the winter) which they owed to free passes presented by some comrade or other.

But in the spring of the following year some overtime work was intrusted to Hector de Gribelin by his chief, for which he received the large sum of three hundred francs.

The day he brought the money home he said to his wife:

"My dear Henrietta, we must indulge in some sort of festivity—say an outing for the children."

And after a long discussion it was decided that they should go and lunch one day in the country.

"Well," cried Hector, "once will not break us for we'll hire a wagonette for you, the children, and the maid. And I'll have a saddle horse; the exercise will do me good."

The whole week long they talked of nothing but the projected excursion.

Every evening, on his return from the office, Hector caught up his elder son, put him astride his leg, and making him bounce up and down as hard as he could, said:

"That's how daddy will gallop next Sunday."

And the youngster amused himself all day long by bestriding chairs, dragging them round the room and shouting:

"This is daddy on horseback!"

The servant herself gazed at her master with awe-struck eyes, as she thought of him riding alongside the carriage, and at mealtimes she listened with all her ears while he spoke of riding, and recounted the exploits of his youth, when he lived at home with his father. Oh, he had learned in a good school, and once he felt his steed between his legs he feared nothing—nothing whatever!

Rubbing his hands, he repeated gayly to his wife:

"If only they would give me a restive animal I should be all the better pleased. You'll see how well

I can ride; and if you like we'll come back by the Champs Elysées just as all the people are returning from the Bois. As we shall make a good appearance, I shouldn't at all object to meeting some one from the Ministry. That is all that is necessary to insure the respect of one's chiefs."

On the day appointed the carriage and the riding horse arrived at the same moment before the door. Hector went down immediately to examine his mount. He had had straps sewn to his trousers, and flourished in his hand a whip he had bought the evening before.

He raised the horse's legs and felt them one after another, passed his hand over the animal's neck, flank, and hocks, opened his mouth, examined his teeth, declared his age; and then, the whole household having collected round him, he delivered a discourse on the horse in general and the specimen before him in particular, pronouncing the latter excellent in every respect.

When the rest of the party had taken their seats in the carriage he examined the saddle-girths; then, putting his foot in the stirrup, he sprang to the saddle. The animal began to curvet, and nearly threw his rider.

Hector, not altogether at his ease, tried to soothe him:

"Come, come, good horse, gently now!"

Then, when the horse had recovered his equanimity, and the rider his nerve, the latter asked:

"Are you ready?"

The occupants of the carriage replied with one voice: "Yes."

"Forward!" he commanded.

And the cavalcade set out.

All looks were centered on him. He trotted in the English style, rising unnecessarily high in the saddle, looking at times as if he were mounting into space. Sometimes he seemed on the point of falling forward on the horse's mane; his eyes were fixed, his face drawn, his cheeks pale.

His wife, holding one of the children on her knees, and the servant, who was carrying the other, continually cried out:

"Look at papa! Look at papa!"

And the two boys, intoxicated by the motion of the carriage, by their delight, and by the keen air, uttered shrill cries. The horse, frightened by the noise they made, started off at a gallop, and while Hector was trying to control his steed his hat fell off, and the driver had to get down and pick it up. When the equestrian had recovered, he called to his wife from a distance:

"Don't let the children shout like that. They'll make the horse bolt!"

They lunched on the grass in the Vesinet woods, having brought provisions with them in the carriage.

Although the driver was looking after the three horses, Hector rose every minute to see if his own lacked anything; he patted him on the neck, and fed him with bread, cakes, and sugar.

"He's an unequal trotter," he declared. "He certainly shook me up a little at first, but, as you saw, I soon got used to it; he knows his master now, and won't give any more trouble."

As had been decided, they returned by the Champs Elysées.

That spacious thoroughfare literally swarmed with vehicles of every kind, and on the sidewalks the pedestrians were so numerous that they looked like two interminable black ribbons unfurling their length from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde. A flood of sunlight played on this gay scene, making the varnish of the carriages, the steel of the harness, and the handles of the carriage door shine with dazzling brilliancy.

An intoxication of life and motion seemed to have invaded this assemblage of human beings, carriages, and horses. In the distance the outlines of the Obelisk could be discerned in a cloud of golden vapor.

As soon as Hector's horse had passed the Arc de Triomphe he became suddenly imbued with fresh energy, and, realizing that his stable was not far off, began to trot rapidly through the maze of wheels, despite all his rider's efforts to restrain him.

The carriage was now far behind. When the horse arrived opposite the Palais de l'Industrie he saw a clear field before him, and, turning to the right, set off at a gallop.

An old woman wearing an apron was crossing the road in leisurely fashion; she happened to be just in

Hector's way as he arrived on the scene riding at full speed. Powerless to control his mount, he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Hi! Look out there! Hi!"

She must have been deaf, for she continued peacefully on her way, until the awful moment when, struck by the horse's crest as by a locomotive under full steam, she rolled ten paces off, turning three somersaults on the way.

Voices yelled:

"Stop him!"

Hector, frantic with terror, clung to the horse's mane, and shouted:

"Help! Help!"

A terrible jolt hurled him, as if shot from a gun, over his horse's ears, and cast him into the arms of a policeman who was running up to stop him.

In the space of a second a furious, gesticulating, vociferating group had gathered round him. An old gentleman with a white moustache, wearing a large round decoration, seemed particularly exasperated. He repeated:

"Confound it! When a man is as awkward as all that he should remain at home, and not come killing people in the streets, if he doesn't know how to handle a horse."

Four men arrived on the scene, carrying the old woman. She appeared to be dead. Her skin was like parchment, her cap on one side, and she was covered with dust.

"Take her to a druggist's," ordered the old gentleman, "and let us go to the commissary of police."

Hector started on his way with a policeman on either side of him; a third was leading his horse. A crowd followed them—and suddenly the wagonette appeared in sight. His wife alighted in consternation, the servant lost her head, the children whimpered. He explained that he would soon be at home, that he had knocked a woman down, and that there was not much the matter. And his family, distracted with anxiety, went on their way.

When they arrived before the commissary, the explanation took place in a few words. He gave his name—Hector de Gribelin, employed at the Ministry of Marine; and then awaited news of the injured woman. A policeman who had been sent to obtain information returned saying that she had recovered consciousness, but was complaining of frightful internal pain. She was a charwoman, sixty-five years of age, named Madame Simon.

When he heard that she was not dead, Hector regained hope, and promised to defray her doctor's bill. Then he hastened to the druggist's. The doorway was thronged; the injured woman, huddled in an armchair, was groaning. Her arms hung at her sides, her face was drawn. Two doctors were still engaged in examining her. No bones were broken, but they feared some internal lesion.

Hector addressed her:

"Do you suffer much?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Where is the pain?"

"I feel as if my stomach were on fire."

A doctor approached.

"Are you the gentleman who caused the accident?"

"I am."

"This woman ought to be sent to a home. I know one where they would take her at five shillings a day. Would you like me to send her there?"

Hector was delighted at the idea, thanked him, and returned home much relieved.

His wife, dissolved in tears, was awaiting him; he reassured her.

"It's all right. This Madame Simon is better already, and will be quite well in two or three days; I have sent her to a home. It's all right."

When he left his office the next day, he went to inquire for Madame Simon. He found her eating soup with an air of great satisfaction.

"Well?" said he.

"Oh, sir," she replied, "I'm just the same. I feel sort of crushed—not a bit better."

Hector waited three days, then he returned. The old woman, fresh-faced and clear-eyed, began to whine when she saw him:

"I can't move, sir; I can't move a bit. I shall be like this for the rest of my days."

A shudder passed through Hector's frame. He asked for the doctor, who merely shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"What can I do? I can't tell what's wrong with her. She shrieks when they try to raise her. They can't even move her chair without her uttering the most distressing cries. I am bound to believe what she tells me; I can't look into her inside. So long as I have no chance of seeing her walk I am not justified in supposing her to be telling lies about herself."

The old woman listened, motionless, a malicious gleam in her eyes.

A week passed, then a fortnight, then a month. Madame Simon did not leave her armchair. She ate from morning to night, grew fat, chatted gayly with the other patients, and seemed to enjoy her immobility as if it were the rest to which she was entitled after fifty years of going up and down stairs, of turning mattresses, of carrying coal from one story to another, of sweeping and dusting.

Hector, at his wits' end, came to see her every day; every day he found her calm and serene, declaring:

"I can't move, sir; I shall never be able to move again."

Every evening Madame de Gribelin, devoured with anxiety, asked:

"How is Madame Simon?"

And every time he replied with a resignation born of despair:

"Just the same; no change whatever."

They dismissed the servant, whose wages they could no longer afford. They economized more rigidly than

ever. The whole of the extra pay had been swallowed up.

Then Hector summoned four noted doctors, who met in consultation over the old woman. She let them examine her, feel her, sound her, watching them the while with a cunning eye.

"We must make her walk," said one.

"But, sirs, I can't!" she cried. "I can't move!"

Then they took hold of her, raised her, and dragged her a short distance; but she slipped from their grasp and fell to the floor, groaning and giving vent to such heartrending cries that they carried her back to her seat with infinite care and precaution.

They pronounced a guarded opinion—agreeing, however, that work was an impossibility to her.

And when Hector brought this news to his wife she sank on a chair, murmuring:

"It would be better to bring her here; it would cost us less."

He started in amazement.

"Here? In our own house? How can you think of such a thing?"

But she, resigned now to anything, replied, with tears in her eyes:

"But what can we do, my love? It's not my fault!"

## JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

### How Gavin Birse Put it to Mag Lownie

In a wet day the rain gathered in blobs on the road that passed our garden. Then it crawled into the cart-tracks until the road was streaked with water. Lastly, the water gathered in heavy yellow pools. If the onding still continued, clods of earth toppled from the garden dyke into the ditch.

On such a day, when even the dulseman [1] had gone into shelter, and the women scudded by with their wrappers over their heads, came Gavin Birse to our door. Gavin, who was the Glen Quharity post, was still young, but had never been quite the same man since some amateurs in the glen ironed his back for rheumatism. I thought he had called to have a crack with me. He sent his compliments up to the attic, however, by Leeby, and would I come and be a witness?

Gavin came up and explained. He had taken off his scarf and thrust it into his pocket, lest the rain should take the color out of it. His boots cheeped, and his shoulders had risen to his ears. He stood streaming before my fire.

"If it's no' ower muckle to ask ye," he said, "I would like ye for a witness."

"A witness! But for what do you need a witness, Gavin?"

"I want ye," he said, "to come wi' me to Mag's, and be a witness."

Gavin and Mag Birse had been engaged for a year or more. Mag was the daughter of Janet Ogilvy, who was best remembered as the body that took the hill (that is, wandered about it) for twelve hours on the day Mr. Dishart, the Auld Licht minister, accepted a call to another church.

"You don't mean to tell me, Gavin," I asked, "that your marriage is to take place to-day?"

By the twist of his mouth I saw that he was only deferring a smile.

"Far frae that," he said.

"Ah, then, you have quarrelled, and I am to speak up for you?"

"Na, na," he said, "I dinna want ye to do that above all things. It would be a favor if ye could gie me a bad character."

This beat me, and, I dare say, my face showed it.

"I'm no' juist what ye would call anxious to marry Mag noo," said Gavin, without a tremor.

I told him to go on.

"There's a lassie oot at Craigiebuckle," he explained, "workin' on the farm—Jeanie Luke by name. Ye may hae seen her?"

"What of her?" I asked, severely.

"Weel," said Gavin, still unabashed, "I'm thinkin' noo 'at I would rather hae her."

Then he stated his case more fully.

"Ay, I thocht I liked Mag oncommon till I saw

Jeanie, an' I like her fine yet, but I prefer the other ane. That state o' matters canna gang on forever, so I came into Thrums the day to settle't one wy or another."

"And how," I asked, "do you propose going about it? It is a somewhat delicate business."

"Ou, I see nae great difficulty in't. I'll speir [1] at Mag, blunt oot, if she'll let me aff. Yes, I'll put it to her plain."

"You're sure Jeanie would take you?"

"Ay; oh, there's nae fear o'that."

"But if Mag keeps you to your bargain?"

"Weel, in that case there's nae harm done."

"You are in a great hurry, Gavin?"

"Ye may say that; but I want to be married. The wifie [2] I lodge wi' canna last lang, an' I would like to settle doon in some place."

"So you are on your way to Mag's now?"

"Ay, we'll get her in atween twal' and ane."

"Oh, yes; but why do you want me to go with you?"

"I want ye for a witness. If she winna let me aff, weel an' guid; an' if she will, it's better to hae a witness in case she should go back on her word."

Gavin made his proposal briskly, and as coolly as if he were only asking me to go fishing; but I did not accompany him to Mag's. He left the house to look for another witness, and about an hour afterward Jess saw him pass with Tammas Haggart. Tammas cried in during the evening to tell us how the mission prospered.

"Mind ye," said Tammas, a drop of water hanging

to the point of his nose, "I disclaim all responsibility in the business. I ken Mag weel for a thrifty, respectable woman, as her mither was afore her, an' so I said to Gavin when he came to speir me."

"Ay, mony a pirn [1] has 'Lisbeth filled to me," said Hendry, settling down to a reminiscence.

"No to be ower hard on Gavin," continued Tammas, forestalling Hendry, "he took what I said in guid part; but aye when I stopped speakin', to draw breath, he says, 'The question is, will ye come wi' me?' He was michty made up in's mind."

"Weel, ye went wi' him," suggested Jess, who wanted to bring Tammas to the point.

"Ay," said the stone-breaker, "but no in sic a hurry as that."

He worked his mouth round and round, to clear the course as it were for a sarcasm.

"Fowk often say," he continued, "'at 'am quick beyond the ordinar' in seein' the humorous side o' things."

Here Tammas paused and looked at us.

"So ye are, Tammas," said Hendry. "Losh, ye mind hoo ye saw the humorous side o' me wearin' a pair o' boots 'at wisna marrows! [2] No, the ane had a toe-piece on, and the other hadna."

"Ye juist wore them sometimes when ye was delvin'," broke in Jess; "ye have as guid a pair o' boots as ony in Thrums."

"Ay, but I had worn them," said Hendry, "at odd times for mair than a year, an' I had never seen the humorous side o' them. Weel, as fac as death (here he

addressed me), Tammas had juist seen them twa or three times when he saw the humorous side o' them. Syne I saw their humorous side, too, but no till Tammas pointed it oot."

"That was naething," said Tammas, "naething ava to some things I've done."

"But what aboot Mag?" said Leeby.

"We wasna that length, was we?" said Tammas. "Na, we was speakin' aboot the humorous side. Ay, wait a wee, I didna mention the humorous side for naething."

He paused to reflect.

"Oh, yes," he said at last, brightening up. "I was sayin' to ye hoo quick I was to see the humorous side o' onything. Ay, then, what made me say that was 'at in a clink I saw the humorous side o' Gavin's position."

"Man, man," said Hendry, admiringly, "an' what is't?"

"Oh, it's this: there's something humorous in speirin' a woman to let ye aff so as ye can be married to another woman."

"I daur say there is," said Hendry, doubtfully.

"Did she let him aff?" asked Jess, taking the words out of Leeby's mouth.

"I'm comin' to that," said Tammas. "Gavin proposes to me after I had ha'en my laugh——"

"Yes," cried Hendry, banging the table with his fist, "it has a humorous side. Ye're richt again, Tammas."

"I wish ye wadna blatter the table," said Jess, and then Tammas proceeded:

"Gavin wanted me to tak paper an' ink an' a pen wi' me, to write the proceedin's doon, but I said, 'Na, na, I'll tak paper, but nae ink nor nae pen, for there'll be ink an' a pen there.' That was what I said."

"An' did she let him aff?" asked Leeby.

"Weel," said Tammas, "aff we goes to Mag's hoose, an' sure enough Mag was in. She was alane, too; so Gavin, no to waste time, juist sat doon for politeness' sake, an' sune rises up again; an' says he, 'Marget Lownie, I hae a solemn question to speir at ye, namely this, Will you, Marget Lownie, let me, Gavin Birse, aff?'"

"Mag would start at that?"

"Sal, she was braw an' cool. I thocht she maun hae got wind o' his intentions aforehand, for she juist replies, quiet-like, 'Hoo do ye want aff, Gavin?'

"'Because,' says he, like a book, 'my affections has undergone a change.'

"'Ye mean Jean Luke?' says Mag.

"'That is wha I mean,' says Gavin, very strait-forrard."

"But she didna let him aff, did she?"

"Na, she wasna the kind. Says she, 'I wonder to hear ye, Gavin, but 'am no goin' to agree to naething o' that sort.'

"'Think it ower,' says Gavin.

"'Na, my mind's made up,' said she.

"'Ye would sune get anither man,' he says earnestly.

"'Hoo do I ken that?' she speirs, rale sensibly, I thocht, for men's no sae easy to get.

"'Am sure o' 't,' Gavin says, wi' michty conviction in his voice, 'for ye're bonny to look at, an' weel kent for bein' a guid body.'

"'Ay,' says Mag. 'I'm glad ye like me, Gavin, for ye have to tak me.'"

"That put a clincher on him," interrupted Hendry.

"He was loth to gie in," replied Tammas, so he says, 'Ye think 'am a fine character, Marget Lownie, but ye're very far mista'en. I wouldna wonder but what I was lossin' my place some o' thae days, an' syne whaur would ye be?—Marget Lownie,' he goes on, ''am nat'rally lazy an' fond o' the drink. As sure as ye stand there, 'am a reg'lar deevil!'"

"That was strong language," said Hendry, "but he would be wantin' to fleg [1] her?"

"Juist so, but he didna manage 't, for Mag says: 'We a' hae oor faults, Gavin, an' deevil or no deevil, ye're the man for me!'"

"Gavin thocht a bit," continued Tammas, "an' syne he tries her on a new tack. 'Marget Lownie,' he says, 'ye're father's an auld man noo, an' he has naebody but yersel' to look after him. I'm thinkin' it would be kind o' cruel o' me to tak' ye awa frae him?'"

"Mag wouldna be ta'en in wi' that; she wasna born on a Sawbath," said Jess, using one of her favorite sayings.

"She wasna," answered Tammas. "Says she, 'Hae

nae fear on that score, Gavin; my father's fine willin' to spare me!'"

"An' that ended it?"

"Ay, that ended it."

"Did ye tak' it doon in writin'?" asked Hendry.

"There was nae need," said Tammas, handing round his snuff-mull. "No, I never touched paper. When I saw the thing was settled, I left them to their coortin'. They're to tak a look at Snecky Hobart's auld hoose the nicht. It's to let."

## KENNETH GRAHAME

### The Blue Room

That nature has her sympathy with man has been noted often enough,—and generally as a new discovery; to us, who had never known any other conditions of things, it seemed entirely right and fitting that the wind sang and sobbed in the poplar tops, and in the lulls of it, sudden spirts of rain spattered the already dusty roads, on that blusterous March day when Edward and I awaited, on the station platform, the arrival of the new tutor. Needless to say, this arrangement had been planned by an aunt, from some fond idea that our shy, innocent young natures would unfold themselves during the walk from the station, and that on the revelation of each other's more solid qualities that must then inevitably ensue, an enduring friendship springing from mutual respect might be firmly based. A pretty dream,—nothing more. For Edward, who foresaw that the brunt of tutorial oppression would have to be borne by him, was sulky, monosyllabic, and determined to be as negatively disagreeable as good manners would permit. It was therefore evident that I would have to be spokesman and purveyor of hollow civilities, and I was none the more amiable on that account; all courtesies, welcomes, explanations, and other court-chamberlain

kind of business, being my special aversion. There was much of the tempestuous March weather in the hearts of both of us, as we sullenly glowered along the carriage-windows of the slackening train.

One is apt, however, to misjudge the special difficulties of a situation; and the reception proved, after all, an easy and informal matter. In a trainful so uniformly bucolic, a tutor was readily recognisable; and his portmanteau had been consigned to the luggage-cart, and his person conveyed into the lane, before I had discharged one of my carefully considered sentences. I breathed more easily, and, looking up at our new friend as we stepped out together, remembered that we had been counting on something altogether more arid, scholastic, and severe. A boyish eager face and a petulant *pince-nez*,[1]—untidy hair,—a head of constant quick turns like a robin's, and a voice that kept breaking into alto,—these were all very strange and new, but not in the least terrible.

He proceeded jerkily through the village, with glances at this side and that; and "Charming," he broke out presently; "quite too charming and delightful!"

I had not counted on this sort of thing, and glanced for help to Edward, who, hands in pockets, looked grimly down his nose. He had taken his line, and meant to stick to it.

Meantime our friend had made an imaginary spy-glass out of his fist, and was squinting through it at something I could not perceive. "What an exquisite

bit!" he burst out; "fifteenth century,—no,—yes, it is!"

I began to feel puzzled, not to say alarmed. It reminded me of the butcher in *The Arabian Nights*, whose common joints, displayed on the shop-front, took to a startled public the appearance of dismembered humanity. This man seemed to see the strangest things in our dull, familiar surroundings.

"Ah!" he broke out again, as we jogged on between hedgerows: "and that field now—back by the downs—with the rain-cloud brooding over it,—that's all David Cox [1]—every bit of it!"

"That field belongs to Farmer Larkin," I explained politely, for of course he could not be expected to know. "I'll take you over to Farmer Cox's to-morrow, if he's a friend of yours; but there's nothing to see there."

Edward, who was hanging sullenly behind, made a face at me, as if to say, "What sort of lunatic have we got here?"

"It has the true pastoral character, this country of yours," went on our enthusiast: "with just that added touch in cottage and farmstead, relics of a bygone art, which makes our English landscape so divine, so unique!"

Really this grasshopper was becoming a burden. These familiar fields and farms, of which we knew every blade and stick, had done nothing that I knew of to be bespattered with adjectives in this way. I had never thought of them as divine, unique, or anything else. They were—well, they were just themselves, and

there was an end of it. Despairingly I jogged Edward in the ribs, as a sign to start rational conversation, but he only grinned and continued obdurate.

"You can see the house now," I remarked, presently; "and that's Selina, chasing the donkey in the paddock,—or is it the donkey chasing Selina? I can't quite make out; but it's them, anyhow."

Needless to say, he exploded with a full charge of adjectives. "Exquisite!" he rapped out; "so mellow and harmonious! and so entirely in keeping!" (I could see from Edward's face that he was thinking who ought to be in keeping.) "Such possibilities of romance, now, in those old gables!"

"If you mean the garrets," I said, "there's a lot of old furniture in them; and one is generally full of apples; and the bats get in sometimes, under the eaves, and flop about until we go up with hair-brushes and things and drive 'em out; but there's nothing else in them that I know of."

"Oh, but there must be more than bats," he cried. "Don't tell me there are no ghosts. I shall be deeply disappointed if there aren't any ghosts."

I did not think it worth while to reply, feeling really unequal to this sort of conversation; besides, we were nearing the house, when my task would be ended. Aunt Eliza met us at the door, and in the cross-fire of adjectives that ensued—both of them talking at once, as grown folks have a habit of doing—we two slipped round to the back of the house, and speedily put several solid acres between us and civilization, for

fear of being ordered in to tea in the drawing-room. By the time we returned, our new importation had gone up to dress for dinner, so till the morrow at least we were free of him.

Meanwhile the March wind, after dropping a while at sundown, had been steadily increasing in volume; and although I fell asleep at my usual hour, about midnight I was awakened by the stress and cry of it. In the bright moonlight, wind-swung branches tossed and swayed eerily across the blinds; there was rumbling in chimneys, whistling in key-holes, and everywhere a clamor and a call. Sleep was out of the question, and, sitting up in bed, I looked round. Edward was up too. "I was wondering when you were going to wake," he said. "It's no good trying to sleep through this. I vote we get up and do something."

"I'm game," I replied. "Let's play at being in a ship at sea" (the plaint of the old house under the buffeting wind suggested this, naturally); "and we can be wrecked on an island, or left on a raft, whichever you choose; but I like an island best myself, because there's more things on it."

Edward on reflection negatived the idea. "It would make too much noise," he pointed out. "There's no fun playing at ships, unless you can make a jolly good row."

The door creaked, and a small figure in white slipped cautiously in. "Thought I heard you talking," said Charlotte. "We don't like it; we're afraid—Selina too. She'll be here in a minute. She's putting on her new dressing-gown she's so proud of."

His arms round his knees, Edward cogitated deeply until Selina appeared, barefooted, and looking slim and tall in the new dressing-gown. Then, "Look here," he exclaimed; "now we're all together, I vote we go and explore!"

"You're always wanting to explore," I said. "What on earth is there to explore for in this house?"

"Biscuits!" said the inspired Edward.

"Hooray! Come on!" chimed in Harold, sitting up suddenly. He had been awake all the time, but had been shamming sleep lest he should be fagged [1] to do anything.

It was indeed a fact, as Edward had remembered, that our thoughtless elders occasionally left the biscuits out, a prize for the night-walking adventurer with nerves of steel.

Edward tumbled out of bed, and pulled a baggy old pair of knickerbockers over his bare shanks. Then he girt himself with a belt, into which he thrust, on the one side a large wooden pistol, on the other an old single-stick; [2] and finally he donned a big slouch-hat—once an uncle's—that we used for playing Guy Fawkes [3] and Charles-the-Second-up-a-tree in. Whatever the audience, Edward, if possible, always dressed for his part with care and conscientiousness; while Harold and I, true Elizabethans,[4] cared little about the mounting of the piece, so long as the real dramatic heart of it beat sound.

Our commander now enjoined on us a silence deep as the grave, reminding us that Aunt Eliza usually slept with an open door, past which we had to file.

"But we'll take the short cut through the Blue Room," said the wary Selina.

"Of course," said Edward, approvingly. "I forgot about that. Now then! You lead the way!"

The Blue Room had in prehistoric times been added to by taking in a superfluous passage, and so not only had the advantage of two doors, but enabled us to get to the head of the stairs without passing the chamber wherein our dragon-aunt lay couched. It was rarely occupied, except when a casual uncle came down for the night. We entered in noiseless file, the room being plunged in darkness, except for a bright strip of moonlight on the floor, across which we must pass for our exit. On this our leading lady chose to pause, seizing the opportunity to study the hang of her new dressing-gown. Greatly satisfied thereat, she proceeded, after the feminine fashion, to peacock and to pose, pacing a minuet down the moonlit patch with an imaginary partner. This was too much for Edward's histrionic[1] instincts and after a moment's pause he drew his single-stick, and with flourishes meet for the occasion, strode onto the stage. A struggle ensued on approved lines, at the end of which Selina was stabbed slowly and with unction, and her corpse borne from the chamber by the ruthless cavalier. The rest of us rushed after in a clump, with capers and gesticulations of delight; the special charm of the performance lying in the necessity for its being carried out with the dumbest of dumb shows.

Once out on the dark landing, the noise of the storm

without told us that we had exaggerated the necessity for silence; so, grasping the tails of each other's night-gowns, even as Alpine climbers rope themselves together in perilous places, we fared stoutly down the staircase-moraine, and across the grim glacier of the hall, to where a faint glimmer from the half-open door of the drawing-room beckoned to us like friendly hostel-lights. Entering, we found that our thriftless seniors had left the sound red heart of a fire, easily coaxed into a cheerful blaze; and biscuits—a plateful—smiled at us in an encouraging sort of way, together with the halves of a lemon, already once squeezed, but still suckable. The biscuits were righteously shared, the lemon segments passed from mouth to mouth; and as we squatted round the fire, its genial warmth consoling our unclad limbs, we realized that so many nocturnal perils had not been braved in vain.

"It's a funny thing," said Edward, as we chatted, "how I hate this room in the daytime. It always means having your face washed, and your hair brushed, and talking silly company talk. But to-night it's really quite jolly. Looks different, somehow."

"I never can make out," I said, "what people come here to tea for. They can have their own tea at home if they like,—they're not poor people,—with jam and things, and drink out of their saucer, and suck their fingers and enjoy themselves; but they come from a long way off, and sit up straight with their feet off the bars of their chairs, and have one cup, and talk the same sort of stuff every time."

Selina sniffed disdainfully. "You don't know anything about it," she said. "In society you have to call on each other. It's the proper thing to do."

"Pooh! *you're* not in society," said Edward, politely; "and, what's more, you never will be."

"Yes, I shall, some day," retorted Selina; "but I shan't ask you to come and see me, so there!"

"Wouldn't come if you did," growled Edward.

"Well, you won't get the chance," rejoined our sister, claiming her right of the last word. There was no heat about these little amenities, which made up—as we understood it—the art of polite conversation.

"I don't like society people," put in Harold from the sofa, where he was sprawling at full length,—a sight the daytime hours would have blushed to witness. "There were some of 'em here this afternoon, when you two had gone off to the station. Oh, and I found a dead mouse on the lawn, and I wanted to skin it, but I wasn't sure I knew how, by myself, and they came out into the garden and patted my head,—I wish people wouldn't do that,—and one of 'em asked me to pick her a flower. Don't know why she couldn't pick it herself: but I said, 'All right, I will if you'll hold my mouse' But she screamed, and threw it away; and Augustus (the cat) got it, and ran away with it. I believe it was really his mouse all the time, 'cos he'd been looking about as if he had lost something, so I wasn't angry with him; but what did *she* want to throw away my mouse for?"

"You have to be careful with mice," reflected Ed-

ward; "they're such slippery things. Do you remember we were playing with a dead mouse once on the piano, and the mouse was Robinson Crusoe, and the piano was the island, and somehow Crusoe slipped down inside the island, into its works, and we couldn't get him out, though we tried rakes and all sorts of things, till the tuner came. And that wasn't till a week after, and then—"

Here Charlotte, who had been nodding solemnly, fell over into the fender; and we realized that the wind had dropped at last, and the house was lapped in a great stillness. Our vacant beds seemed to be calling to us imperiously; and we were all glad when Edward gave the signal for retreat. At the top of the staircase Harold unexpectedly turned mutinous, insisting on his right to slide down the banisters in a free country. Circumstances did not allow of argument; I suggested frog's marching instead, and frog's-marched he accordingly was, the procession passing solemnly across the moonlit Blue Room, with Harold horizontal and limply submissive. Snug in bed at last, I was just slipping off into slumber when I heard Edward explode with a chuckle and snort.

"By Jove!" he said; "I forgot all about it. The new tutor's sleeping in the Blue Room!"

"Lucky he didn't wake up and catch us," I grunted, drowsily; and both of us, without another thought on the matter, sank into well-earned repose.

Next morning we came down to breakfast braced to grapple with fresh adversity, but were surprised to find

our garrulous friend of the previous day—he was late in making his appearance—strangely silent and (apparently) preoccupied. Having polished off our porridge, we ran out to feed the rabbits, explaining to them that a beast of a tutor would prevent their enjoying so much of our society as formerly.

On returning to the house at the fated hour appointed for study, we were thunderstruck to see the station-cart disappearing down the drive, freighted with our new acquaintance. Aunt Eliza was brutally uncommunicative; but she was overheard to remark casually that she thought the man must be a lunatic. In this theory we were only too ready to concur, dismissing thereafter the whole matter from our minds.

Some weeks later it happened that Uncle Thomas, while paying us a flying visit, produced from his pocket a copy of the latest weekly, *Psyche: a Journal of the Unseen;* and proceeded laboriously to rid himself of much incomprehensible humor, apparently at our expense. We bore it patiently, with the forced grin demanded by convention, anxious to get at the source of inspiration, which it presently appeared lay in a paragraph circumstantially describing our modest and humdrum habitation. "Case III," it began. "The following particulars were communicated by a young member of the Society, of undoubted probity and earnestness, and are a chronicle of actual and recent experience." A fairly accurate description of the house followed, with details that were unmistakable; but to this there succeeded a flood of meaningless drivel about

apparitions, nightly visitants, and the like, writ in a manner betokening a disordered mind, coupled with a feeble imagination. The fellow was not even original. All the old material was there,—the storm at night, the haunted chamber, the white lady, the murder re-enacted, and so on,—already worn threadbare in many a Christmas Number. No one was able to make head or tail of the stuff, or of its connection with our quiet mansion; and yet Edward, who had always suspected the man, persisted in maintaining that our tutor of a brief span was, somehow or other, at the bottom of it.

## RUDYARD KIPLING

### Wee Willie Winkie

"An officer and a gentleman."

His full name was Percival William Williams, but he picked up the other name in a nursery book, and that was the end of the christened titles. His mother's *ayah* called him Willie-*Baba*, but as he never paid the faintest attention to anything that the *ayah* said, her wisdom did not help matters.

His father was the Colonel of the 195th, and as soon as Wee Willie Winkie was old enough to understand what Military Discipline meant, Colonel Williams put him under it. There was no other way of managing the child. When he was good for a week, he drew good-conduct pay; and when he was bad, he was deprived of his good-conduct stripe. Generally he was bad, for India offers so many chances to little six-year-olds of going wrong.

Children resent familiarity from strangers, and Wee Willie Winkie was a very particular child. Once he accepted an acquaintance, he was graciously pleased to thaw. He accepted Brandis, a subaltern of the 195th, on sight. Brandis was having tea at the Colonel's, and Wee Willie Winkie entered strong in the

possession of a good-conduct badge won for not chasing the hens round the compound. He regarded Brandis with gravity for at least ten minutes, and then delivered himself of his opinion.

"I like you," said he slowly, getting off his chair and coming over to Brandis. "I like you. I shall call you Coppy, because of your hair. Do you *mind* being called Coppy? it is because of ve hair, you know."

Here was one of the most embarrassing of Wee Willie Winkie's peculiarities. He would look at a stranger for some time, and then, without warning or explanation, would give him a name. And the name stuck. No regimental penalties could break Wee Willie Winkie of this habit. He lost his good-conduct badge for christening the Commissioner's wife "Pobs;" but nothing that the Colonel could do made the Station forego the nickname, and Mrs. Collen remained Mrs. "Pobs" till the end of her stay. So Brandis was christened "Coppy," and rose, therefore, in the estimation of the regiment.

If Wee Willie Winkie took an interest in any one, the fortunate man was envied alike by the mess and the rank and file. And in their envy lay no suspicion of self-interest. "The Colonel's son" was idolized on his own merits entirely. Yet Wee Willie Winkie was not lovely. His face was permanently freckled, as his legs were permanently scratched, and in spite of his mother's almost tearful remonstrances he had insisted upon having his long, yellow locks cut short in the military fashion. "I want my hair like Sergeant Tum-

mil's," said Wee Willie Winkie, and his father abetting, the sacrifice was accomplished.

Three weeks after the bestowal of his youthful affections on Lieutenant Brandis—henceforward to be called "Coppy" for the sake of brevity—Wee Willie Winkie was destined to behold strange things and far beyond his comprehension.

Coppy returned his liking with interest. Coppy had let him wear for five rapturous minutes his own big sword—just as tall as Wee Willie Winkie. Coppy had promised him a terrier puppy; and Coppy had permitted him to witness the miraculous operation of shaving. Nay, more—Coppy had said that even he, Wee Willie Winkie, would rise in time to the ownership of a box of shiny knives, a silver soap-box and a silver-handled "sputter-brush," as Wee Willie Winkie called it. Decidedly, there was no one except his father, who could give or take away good-conduct badges at pleasure, half so wise, strong, and valiant as Coppy with the Afghan and Egyptian medals on his breast. Why, then, should Coppy be guilty of the unmanly weakness of kissing—vehemently kissing—a "big girl," Miss Allardyce to wit? In the course of a morning ride, Wee Willie Winkie had seen Coppy so doing, and, like the gentleman he was, had promptly wheeled round and cantered back to his groom, lest the groom should also see.

Under ordinary circumstances he would have spoken to his father, but he felt instinctively that this was a matter on which Coppy ought first to be consulted.

"Coppy," shouted Wee Willie Winkie, reining up outside that subaltern's bungalow early one morning—"I want to see you, Coppy!"

"Come in, young 'un," returned Coppy, who was at early breakfast in the midst of his dogs. "What mischief have you been getting into now?"

Wee Willie Winkie had done nothing notoriously bad for three days, and so stood on a pinnacle of virtue.

"I've been doing nothing bad," said he, curling himself into a long chair with a studious affectation of the Colonel's languor after a hot parade. He buried his freckled nose in a teacup and, with eyes staring roundly over the rim, asked:—"I say, Coppy, is it pwoper to kiss big girls?"

"By Jove! You're beginning early. Who do you want to kiss?"

"No one. My muvver's always kissing me if I don't stop her. If it isn't pwoper, how was you kissing Major Allardyce's big girl last morning, by ve canal?"

Coppy's brow wrinkled. He and Miss Allardyce had with great craft managed to keep their engagement secret for a fortnight. There were urgent and imperative reasons why Major Allardyce should not know how matters stood for at least another month, and this small marplot had discovered a great deal too much.

"I saw you," said Wee Willie Winkie calmly. "But ve groom didn't see. I said, '*Hut jao.*'"

"Oh, you had that much sense, you young Rip," groaned poor Coppy, half amused and half angry. "And how many people may you have told about it?"

"Only me myself. You didn't tell when I twied to wide ve buffalo ven my pony was lame; and I fought you wouldn't like."

"Winkie," said Coppy enthusiastically, shaking the small hand, "you're the best of good fellows. Look here, you can't understand all these things. One of these days—hang it, how can I make you see it!—I'm going to marry Miss Allardyce, and then she'll be Mrs. Coppy, as you say. If your young mind is so scandalized at the idea of kissing big girls, go and tell your father."

"What will happen?" said Wee Willie Winkie, who firmly believed that his father was omnipotent.

"I shall get into trouble," said Coppy, playing his trump card with an appealing look at the holder of the ace.

"Ven I won't," said Wee Willie Winkie briefly. "But my faver says it's un-man-ly to be always kissing, and I didn't fink *you'd* do vat, Coppy."

"I'm not always kissing, old chap. It's only now and then, and when you're bigger you'll do it too. Your father meant it's not good for little boys."

"Ah!" said Wee Willie Winkie, now fully enlightened. "It's like ve sputter-brush?"

"Exactly," said Coppy gravely.

"But I don't fink I'll ever want to kiss big girls, nor no one, 'cept my muvver. And I *must* vat, you know."

There was a long pause, broken by Wee Willie Winkie.

"Are you fond of vis big girl, Coppy?"

"Awfully!" said Coppy.

"Fonder van you are of Bell or ve Butcha—or me?"

"It's in a different way," said Coppy. "You see, one of these days Miss Allardyce will belong to me, but you'll grow up and command the Regiment and—all sorts of things. It's quite different, you see."

"Very well," said Wee Willie Winkie, rising. "If you're fond of ve big girl, I won't tell any one. I must go now."

Coppy rose and escorted his small guest to the door, adding:—"You're the best of little fellows, Winkie. I tell you what. In thirty days from now you can tell if you like—tell any one you like."

Thus the secret of the Brandis-Allardyce engagement was dependent on a little child's word. Coppy, who knew Wee Willie Winkie's idea of truth, was at ease, for he felt that he would not break promises. Wee Willie Winkie betrayed a special and unusual interest in Miss Allardyce, and, slowly revolving round that embarrassed young lady, was used to regard her gravely with unwinking eye. He was trying to discover why Coppy should have kissed her. She was not half so nice as his own mother. On the other hand, she was Coppy's property, and would in time belong to him. Therefore it behooved him to treat her with as much respect as Coppy's big sword or shiny pistol.

The idea that he shared a great secret in common with Coppy kept Wee Willie Winkie unusually virtuous for three weeks. Then the Old Adam broke out, and he made what he called a "camp fire" at the bottom

of the garden. How could he have foreseen that the flying sparks would have lighted the Colonel's little hayrick and consumed a week's store for the horses? Sudden and swift was the punishment—deprivation of the good-conduct badge and, most sorrowful of all, two days confinement to barracks—the house and veranda—coupled with the withdrawal of the light of his father's countenance.

He took the sentence like the man he strove to be, drew himself up with a quivering under-lip, saluted, and, once clear of the room, ran to weep bitterly in his nursery—called by him "my quarters." Coppy came in the afternoon and attempted to console the culprit.

"I'm under awwest," said Wee Willie Winkie mournfully, "and I didn't ought to speak to you."

Very early the next morning he climbed on to the roof of the house—that was not forbidden—and beheld Miss Allardyce going for a ride.

"Where are you going?" cried Wee Willie Winkie.

"Across the river," she answered, and trotted forward.

Now the cantonment in which the 195th lay was bounded on the north by a river—dry in the winter. From his earliest years, Wee Willie Winkie had been forbidden to go across the river, and had noted that even Coppy—the almost almighty Coppy—had never set foot beyond it. Wee Willie Winkie had once been read to, out of a big blue book, the history of the Princess and the Goblins—a most wonderful tale of a land where the Goblins were always warring with the

children of men until they were defeated by one Curdie. Ever since that date it seemed to him that the bare black and purple hills across the river were inhabited by Goblins, and, in truth, every one had said that there lived the Bad Men. Even in his own house the lower halves of the windows were covered with green paper on account of the Bad Men who might, if allowed clear view, fire into peaceful drawing-rooms and comfortable bedrooms. Certainly, beyond the river, which was the end of all the Earth, lived the Bad Men. And here was Major Allardyce's big girl, Coppy's property, preparing to venture into their borders! What would Coppy say if anything happened to her? If the Goblins ran off with her as they did with Curdie's Princess? She must at all hazards be turned back.

The house was still. Wee Willie Winkie reflected for a moment on the very terrible wrath of his father; and then—broke his arrest! It was a crime unspeakable. The low sun threw his shadow, very large and very black, on the trim garden paths, as he went down to the stables and ordered his pony. It seemed to him in the hush of the dawn that all the big world had been bidden to stand still and look at Wee Willie Winkie guilty of mutiny. The drowsy groom handed him his mount, and, since the one great sin made all others insignificant, Wee Willie Winkie said that he was going to ride over to Coppy Sahib, and went out at a footpace, stepping on the soft mould of the flower borders.

The devastating track of the pony's feet was the last

misdeed that cut him off from all sympathy of Humanity. He turned into the road, leaned forward, and rode as fast as the pony could put foot to the ground in the direction of the river.

But the liveliest of twelve-two ponies can do little against the long canter of a Waler. Miss Allardyce was far ahead, had passed through the crops, beyond the Police post, where all the guards were asleep, and her mount was scattering the pebbles of the river bed as Wee Willie Winkie left the cantonment and British India behind him. Bowed forward and still flogging, Wee Willie Winkie shot into Afghan territory, and could just see Miss Allardyce a black speck, flickering across the stony plain. The reason of her wandering was simple enough. Coppy, in a tone of too-hastily-assumed authority, had told her over night that she must not ride out by the river. And she had gone to prove her own spirit and teach Coppy a lesson.

Almost at the foot of the inhospitable hills, Wee Willie Winkie saw the Waler blunder and come down heavily. Miss Allardyce struggled clear, but her ankle had been severely twisted, and she could not stand. Having thus demonstrated her spirit, she wept copiously, and was surprised by the apparition of a white, wide-eyed child in khaki, on a nearly spent pony.

"Are you badly, badly hurted?" shouted Wee Willie Winkie, as soon as he was within range. "You didn't ought to be here."

"I don't know," said Miss Allardyce ruefully,

ignoring the reproof. "Good gracious, child, what are *you* doing here?"

"You said you was going acwoss ve wiver," panted Wee Willie Winkie, throwing himself off his pony. "And nobody—not even Coppy—must go acwoss ve wiver, and I came after you ever so hard, but you wouldn't stop, and now you've hurted yourself, and Coppy will be angwy wiv me, and—I've bwoken my awwest! I've bwoken my awwest!"

The future Colonel of the 195th sat down and sobbed. In spite of the pain in her ankle the girl was moved.

"Have you ridden all the way from cantonments, little man? What for?"

"You belonged to Coppy. Coppy told me so!" wailed Wee Willie Winkie disconsolately. "I saw him kissing you, and he said he was fonder of you van Bell or ve Butcha or me. And so I came. You must get up and come back. You didn't ought to be here. Vis is a bad place, and I've bwoken my awwest."

"I can't move, Winkie," said Miss Allardyce, with a groan. "I've hurt my foot. What shall I do?"

She showed a readiness to weep afresh, which steadied Wee Willie Winkie, who had been brought up to believe that tears were the depth of unmanliness. Still, when one is as great a sinner as Wee Willie Winkie, even a man may be permitted to break down.

"Winkie," said Miss Allardyce, "when you've rested a little, ride back and tell them to send out something to carry me back in. It hurts fearfully."

The child sat still for a little time and Miss Allardyce

closed her eyes; the pain was nearly making her faint. She was roused by Wee Willie Winkie tying up the reins on his pony's neck and setting it free with a vicious cut of his whip that made it whicker. The little animal headed towards the cantonments.

"Oh, Winkie! What are you doing?"

"Hush!" said Wee Willie Winkie. "Vere's a man coming—one of ve Bad Men. I must stay wiv you. My faver says a man must *always* look after a girl. Jack will go home, and ven vey'll come and look for us. Vat's why I let him go."

Not one man but two or three had appeared from behind the rocks of the hills, and the heart of Wee Willie Winkie sank within him, for just in this manner were the Goblins wont to steal out and vex Curdie's soul. Thus had they played in Curdie's garden, he had seen the picture, and thus had they frightened the Princess's nurse. He heard them talking to each other, and recognized with joy the bastard Pushto that he had picked up from one of his father's grooms lately dismissed. People who spoke that tongue could not be the Bad Men. They were only natives after all.

They came up to the bowlders on which Miss Allardyce's horse had blundered.

Then rose from the rock Wee Willie Winkie, child of the Dominant Race, aged six and three quarters, and said briefly and emphatically "*Jao!*" The pony had crossed the river bed.

The men laughed, and laughter from natives was the

one thing Wee Willie Winkie could not tolerate. He asked them what they wanted and why they did not depart. Other men with most evil faces and crooked-stocked guns crept out of the shadows of the hills, till soon Wee Willie Winkie was face to face with an audience some twenty strong. Miss Allardyce screamed.

"Who are you?" said one of the men.

"I am the Colonel Sahib's son, and my order is that you go at once. You black men are frightening the Miss Sahib. One of you must run into cantonments and take the news that the Miss Sahib has hurt herself, and that the Colonel's son is here with her."

"Put our feet into the trap?" was the laughing reply. "Hear this boy's speech!"

"Say that I sent you—I, the Colonel's son. They will give you money."

"What is the use of this talk? Take up the child and the girl, and we can at least ask for the ransom. Ours are the villages on the heights," said a voice in the background.

These *were* the Bad Men—worse than Goblins—and it needed all Wee Willie Winkie's training to prevent him from bursting into tears. But he felt that to cry before a native, excepting only his mother's *ayah*, would be an infamy greater than any mutiny. Moreover, he, as future Colonel of the 195th, had that grim regiment at his back.

"Are you going to carry us away?" said Wee Willie Winkie, very blanched and uncomfortable.

"Yes, my little *Sahib Bahadur*," said the tallest of the men, "and eat you afterwards."

"That is child's talk," said Wee Willie Winkie. "Men do not eat men."

A yell of laughter interrupted him, but he went on firmly,—"And if you do carry us away, I tell you that all my regiment will come up in a day and kill you all without leaving one. Who will take my message to the Colonel Sahib?"

Speech in any vernacular—and Wee Willie Winkie had a colloquial acquaintance with three—was easy to the boy who could not yet manage his "r's" and "th's" aright.

Another man joined the conference, crying:—"O foolish men! What this babe says is true. He is the heart's heart of those white troops. For the sake of peace let them both go, for if he be taken, the regiment will break loose and gut the valley. *Our* villages are in the valley, and we shall not escape. That regiment are devils. They broke Khoda Yar's breastbone with kicks when he tried to take the rifles; and if we touch this child they will fire and rape and plunder for a month, till nothing remains. Better to send a man back to take the message and get a reward. I say that this child is their God, and that they will spare none of us, nor our women, if we harm him."

It was Din Mahommed, the dismissed groom of the Colonel, who made the diversion, and an angry and heated discussion followed. Wee Willie Winkie, standing over Miss Allardyce, waited the upshot. Surely

his "wegiment," his own "wegiment," would not desert him if they knew of his extremity.

. . . . . .

The riderless pony brought the news to the 195th, though there had been consternation in the Colonel's household for an hour before. The little beast came in through the parade-ground in front of the main barracks where the men were settling down to play Spoil-five till the afternoon. Devlin, the Color Sergeant of E Company, glanced at the empty saddle and tumbled through the barrack-rooms, kicking up each Room Corporal as he passed. "Up, ye beggars! There's something happened to the Colonel's son," he shouted.

"He couldn't fall off! S'elp me, 'e *couldn't* fall off," blubbered a drummer-boy. "Go an' hunt acrost the river. He's over there if he's anywhere, an' maybe those Pathans have got 'im. For the love o' Gawd don't look for 'im in the nullahs! Let's go over the river."

"There's sense in Mott yet," said Devlin. "E Company, double out to the river—sharp!"

So E Company, in its shirt sleeves mainly, doubled for the dear life, and in the rear toiled the perspiring Sergeant, adjuring it to double yet faster. The cantonment was alive with the men of the 195th hunting for Wee Willie Winkie, and the Colonel finally overtook E Company, far too exhausted to swear, struggling in the pebbles of the river bed.

Up the hill under which Wee Willie Winkie's Bad

Men were discussing the wisdom of carrying off the child and the girl, a lookout fired two shots.

"What have I said?" shouted Din Mahommed. "There is the warning! The *pulton* are out already and are coming across the plain! Get away! Let us not be seen with the boy!"

The men waited for an instant, and then, as another shot was fired, withdrew into the hills, silently as they had appeared.

"The wegiment is coming," said Wee Willie Winkie confidently to Miss Allardyce, "and it's all wight. Don't cwy!"

He needed the advice himself, for ten minutes later, when his father came up, he was weeping bitterly with his head in Miss Allardyce's lap.

And the men of the 195th carried him home with shouts and rejoicings; and Coppy, who had ridden a horse into a lather, met him, and, to his intense disgust, kissed him openly in the presence of the men.

But there was balm for his dignity. His father assured him that not only would the breaking of arrest be condoned, but that the good-conduct badge would be restored as soon as his mother could sew it on his blouse-sleeve. Miss Allardyce had told the Colonel a story that made him proud of his son.

"She belonged to you, Coppy," said Wee Willie Winkie, indicating Miss Allardyce with a grimy forefinger. "I *knew* she didn't ought to go acwoss ve wiver, and I knew ve wegiment would come to me if I sent Jack home."

"You're a hero, Winkie," said Coppy—"a *pukka* hero!"

"I don't know what vat means," said Wee Willie Winkie, "but you mustn't call me Winkie any no more. I'm Percival Will'am Will'ams."

And in this manner did Wee Willie Winkie enter into his manhood.

# NOTES

## SIR WALTER SCOTT (Page 15)

Walter Scott, the descendant of a long line of riding and fighting Border ancestors, was born in Edinburgh on August 15, 1771. Although he was a child of great spirit, an unfortunate lameness left from an early sickness kept him for some years from outdoor sports, and led him to pass much time in reading. He devoured innumerable old ballads and legends which stimulated his imagination and gave him a lifelong interest in history and romance. After leaving the University of Edinburgh, he studied for his father's profession, the law, and was admitted to the bar in 1792. Not unsuccessful as a solicitor, he was appointed in 1799 Sheriff of Selkirk, and later, in 1806, a Clerk to the Court of Session.

Meanwhile, however, he was storing his memory with the traditions of the Border Country, and also following his native bent towards literature. He translated from the German in 1795 Bürger's ballad of "Lenore"; followed it in 1799 with an English rendering of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen;* and published in 1802 an important collection, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.* In 1805 appeared his first original poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel,* which caught the popular fancy and placed him at once among the foremost men of letters of his time. Other verse-romances of the same picturesque and vigorous type followed: *Marmion* in 1808, *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810, and *The Vision of Don Roderick* in 1811.

In 1812, with his increasing prosperity, he purchased an estate at Abbotsford on the river Tweed, and built there the rambling baronial castle visited to-day with reverence by so many Scott enthusiasts.

By this time, Scott had firmly established his reputation as a narrative poet. About 1814, however, the appearance of Byron in the same field confronted him with a formidable rival, and accordingly, taking up again a manuscript which he had left unfinished in 1805, Scott produced *Waverley*, the first of the famous series of novels. From this date until just before his death in 1832, there poured from his pen a marvellous succession of prose romances, nearly two a year on the average, which gave him more fame, perhaps, than any other English author has ever enjoyed during his lifetime; for, though published anonymously, their authorship was soon an open secret. Among the best of this notable series are *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *Ivanhoe* (1819), *Kenilworth* (1821), *Quentin Durward* (1823), and *Redgauntlet* (1824). The terrific strain of Scott's numerous activities brought on, in 1817, a severe stomach attack, and several of his books were dictated to an amanuensis while he himself suffered intense pain.

In 1820, he was made a baronet, and he seemed, with wealth, social prestige, and literary distinction, to have reached the very pinnacle of achievement. Unfortunately, however, in 1826 a publishing house in which he had invested failed, and he was saddled with liabilities amounting to over $600,000. Despite this blow and the disaster of his wife's illness and death, he set resolutely to work to pay off the enormous debt. Volume after volume came out under his name, one novel alone, *Woodstock* (1826), earning him $40,000. In 1830 the over-wrought body and brain broke down, and although he was sent abroad on a government frigate, he never recovered. When he died on September 21, 1832, the whole world mourned his loss.

Scott as a man commands both our admiration and our affection. Generous, tolerant, and whole-hearted, without sham or affectation, he was one of "nature's noblemen." As a writer, he was tireless in energy and rapid in composition. He was a delightful and facile story-teller, with a genius for vigorous and absorbing narrative, an unusual power of characterization, and

a fluency which could not be kept within bounds by technical restraints. In a singular combination of creative imagination with practical sagacity, he has no equal but Shakespeare.

## Wandering Willie's Tale

*Wandering Willie's Tale*, taken from *Redgauntlet*, is a story related by the blind fiddler, Willie Steenson,—"the best fiddler that ever kittled thairm with horse-hair"—to Darsie Latimer, the young hero of the romance. Scott, it must be remembered, lived before the days of fine distinctions between the Short Story and the story that is merely short; accordingly, though the tale, as Sir Leslie Stephen points out, bears all the marks of careful workmanship, it is, in more than one respect, defective in structure as compared with the later work of Poe and Maupassant. It is unnecessarily delayed in starting; and the last paragraph certainly contributes little to the general effect.

The tale is, however, the product of a born story-teller, and the interest is maintained steadily through passages which Stevenson and Kipling would ruthlessly have omitted. The minor blemishes count for nothing beside the originality of Steenie's character and the charm of his mysterious adventure. The student will do well not to trouble himself overmuch about the dialect, but to throw himself at once into the spirit of the story and its author.

The historical references in the tale can be explained by consulting any English History. The Marquis of Montrose (see Scott's *Legend of Montrose*) headed the Scotch troops in assisting Charles I against the Parliamentary army, and after winning several brilliant victories, was finally captured and hanged in 1650. The Earl of Glencairn, a strong cavalier, took charge of the forces of Charles II in Scotland in 1652, and withstood General Monk. Charles II was restored in 1660, and those who had stood by his cause were, like Redgauntlet, suitably rewarded.

**15, 1. Of that Ilk.** A phrase meaning that a person's name

and his estate are the same; here, Sir Robert Redgauntlet of Redgauntlet.

2. **Whigs and Covenanters.** The term Whig was applied to those opposed to the Court. A Covenanter was one who opposed the effort to make the Church of England dominant in Scotland. Redgauntlet was a prelatist, or member of the Church party.

3. **Dour.** Obstinate.

**16,** 1. **The test.** An oath of allegiance to the Church of England and its doctrine.

2. **Carrifragawns.** The precipitous side of a mountain in Moffatdale.

3. **Whilk.** An obsolete form of *which*.

4. **Wared.** Expended.

5. **Scoup.** To leap or bound away.

6. **Riding days.** The days of the early Border raids.

7. **Callerer.** Cooler.

**17,** 1. **Hosting.** The mustering of soldiers.

2. **The Revolution** of 1688, which deprived James II of his throne and established William and Mary as English sovereigns, naturally gave the Whigs for once the upper hand over their old enemies, the Tories.

3. **Unca.** Uncommon.

**18,** 1. **Bating.** Excepting.

2. **Brash.** Brush or attack.

3. **Gear.** Goods or property.

4. **Professor.** One who makes public acknowledgment of his religious belief.

5. **Orra sough.** An occasional whiff.

**19,** 1. **His leesome lane.** All by himself.

2. **Warlock.** Wizard.

3. **Gash.** Grim.

**20,** 1. **Girned.** Grinned.

2. **Sculduddry sangs.** Coarse songs.

3. **Toom.** Empty.

**21,** 1. **Garr'd.** Shook.

2. **Ilk.** Each.

**22, 1. The Union.** The last Scotch Parliament met in May, 1703, and the Act of Union between England and Scotland was passed on March 6, 1707.

2. **Ae.** One.

**23, 1. Carles.** Fellows.

2. **Blaud of Davie Lindsay.** *Blaud* means ballad. Sir David Lindsay (1490–1555) was a Scotch poet and satirist.

3. **Anes and aye.** Once and for all.

**24, 1. Bogle-wark.** Ghostly appearances.

2. **Hesp.** Hank of yarn.

**25, 1. Talis qualis.** Of some kind.

**28, 1. Dyvour.** Bankrupt.

2. **Wanchancie.** Unlucky.

**32, 1. Birling.** Drinking.

2. **The fierce Middleton,** etc. The personages named here were all notorious for their persecution of the Covenanters. John Graham of Claverhouse, perhaps the worst of the oppressors, was sent in 1677 to Scotland, and kept the country in a state of terror for two years.

**38, 1. Skelloch.** Yell.

2. **Riped.** Raked.

**39, 1. Dirdum.** Stir.

**41, 1. Threap.** Aver, assert.

## WASHINGTON IRVING (Page 42)

Washington Irving, the earliest great American man of letters as well as our first Short Story writer of any distinction, was born on April 3, 1783, in New York City. Like Scott, he was educated to become a lawyer; but a pulmonary trouble drove him abroad in 1804 for the benefit of his health, and when he returned recovered in 1806, he devoted his attention to literature. In 1809 he gained popular favor with his clever *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, a burlesque on the old Dutch settlers.

After some distasteful work as an editor, he returned to Europe in 1815, where he remained until 1832, traveling and making

those extensive researches into Spanish history which resulted in his *Life and Voyages of Columbus* (1828), *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), *Legends of the Conquest of Spain* (1835), and *Mahomet and his Successors* (1849). During this period also he published *The Sketch Book* (1819), *The Tales of a Traveller* (1824), and *The Alhambra* (1832), the three volumes which contain his most noteworthy Short Stories.

In 1842 President Tyler appointed Irving Minister to Spain, an office which he held until 1846. In the year of his return he published an admirable *Life of Goldsmith*, and in 1855 appeared the first volume of his great *Life of Washington*, which was completed in 1859. For some time before his death he lived in a simple country house at Sunnyside on the Hudson, near the Sleepy Hollow which he has immortalized. There on November 28, 1859, he died.

Irving had a large, tender heart and a genial, sympathetic nature. His work, as historian, essayist, and Short Story writer, is remarkable for charm of style rather than for strength or force. With no particular originality or dramatic intensity, he possessed a gentle urbane humor, an easy grace of manner, and a refined sentiment which link him with Addison and Goldsmith. Like Scott, he was a born narrator; but without having mastered the somewhat artificial structure which Poe was soon to employ, he had learned—what Scott never completely acquired—the art of order, restraint, and symmetry. His best stories, "Rip Van Winkle" and "A Legend of Sleepy Hollow," have become classics, not because of any remarkable technique, but because they have that peculiar combination of humor, pathos, and mystery which make up the characteristic Irving touch. They are simple stories, related without artifice, and yet with a directness which carries every reader along.

### The Devil and Tom Walker

*The Devil and Tom Walker* is taken from *Tales of a Traveller*, where it occurs as the third story in Part IV, *The Money Diggers*. It is a tale supposed to have been told by an "old, iron-faced

Cape Cod whaler," who was led to the narration by the fishing up of a rusty pistol from the waters of Long Island Sound. The story itself illustrates admirably Irving's leisurely method and his plausible way of dealing with the supernatural. It will be noticed that the actual beginning of the tale is delayed by the introductory material and that Irving unnecessarily prolongs his narration beyond the real climax. The mysterious and the humorous are used to balance one another with a result that is exceedingly effective.

**54, 1. Rhino.** Money.

2. **Governor Belcher.** Jonathan Belcher (1681–1757) was, for a time, governor of Massachusetts and New Jersey.

**59, 1. The devil and Tom Walker.** The saying was used as a caution to usurers.

## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (Page 60)

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts, the son of a sea captain of that city. As a boy he was vigorous and athletic, but also quiet and retiring, averse to regular study but fond of desultory reading. He was prepared by a private tutor for Bowdoin College, where he graduated in 1825 with no especial distinction. For ten years afterward, he led a secluded life, "practically without a companion in the world," devoting himself almost entirely to literature, laboring assiduously to perfect his style and method, and contributing occasional articles to magazines. The first edition of *Twice-Told Tales* was published in 1837.

In 1839 Hawthorne was appointed weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom House, a position which, although withdrawn at the end of two years, was beneficial in bringing him at last into contact with men and affairs. On losing this place in 1840, he joined the socialistic community at Brook Farm (see his *Blithedale Romance*), but soon grew weary of the monotonous routine. His marriage with Miss Sophia Peabody took place in 1842, and

he settled down with her in the "Old Manse" in Concord. Financial necessities drove him, in 1846, to accept the office of Surveyor in the Salem Custom House, but he was deprived of this source of income in 1849. His resignation left him with ample leisure, which he employed in writing *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), his masterpiece, a vivid and powerful romance which raised him immediately to literary eminence.

The stimulus of this unexpected popular success roused his ambition, and other works followed rapidly, among them *The House of Seven Gables* in 1851, *The Blithedale Romance* in 1852, and *Tanglewood Tales* in 1853. In this last year his college friend, President Franklin Pierce, made him United States Consul at Liverpool. He remained in England until 1856, when, because of failing health, he resigned and went to Italy, where he composed his last great romance, *The Marble Faun* (1860).

Returning to America in 1860, he found himself depressed and able to write only intermittently. He died suddenly in 1864, while on a trip with Pierce through the White Mountains. Many fragmentary tales which he left unfinished were afterwards published, but they contributed nothing to his fame.

Hawthorne was a meditative, sensitive man, of proud yet gentle nature and highly developed imagination. His character, at bottom sane and robust, had nevertheless a strong element of mysticism, combined with a fondness for the weird, the morbid, and the supernatural. A subtle but profound idealism led him towards moral and ethical themes and the portrayal of the human soul.

Hawthorne belongs with Irving and Poe as one of the three great originators and perfecters of the American Short Story. It was his achievement to "apply a profound psychology to the art of fiction," and accordingly to discover a new field for the Short Story. His work is marked by a delight in symbolism and allegory, by an inclination to moralize, by a marked interest in problems of conscience and character analysis, and by a style rich, varied, graceful, dignified, and suggestive. He discovered the secret that a Short Story, to be effective, must be built around

a single situation or individual, and this resulted in his attaining in some cases a unified and coherent structure. His success in construction, however, was due, not primarily to any deliberate theory or art, carefully worked out for the Short Story alone, but to the fact that his themes and topics were peculiarly well adapted to that particular literary form.

### The Ambitious Guest

*The Ambitious Guest* was first printed in *The New England Magazine* for June, 1835. It is based probably on the incident of the destruction of a certain Willey family in 1826 by a landslide in the White Mountains. The theme, as Professor C. A. Smith describes it, is "the futility of a noble ambition." It is to be noticed that Hawthorne, not content with suggesting this idea in the conversation of all the eight characters, proceeds to add also a word of moralizing at the conclusion. The story is unified in both mood and structure: the note of fatality, sounded at the end of the first paragraph, is carried on as a low and tragic undertone throughout the tale, until the family are swallowed up as if by a decree of fate. The climax, as Professor Canby points out, is "not the death of all in the great slide, but the sudden end of that ambition which has been spreading infectiously from the guest to the simple household of his hosts." The style, suited admirably to the narrative, is somber, with an occasional passage of rich and mournful eloquence, as in the speeches of the stranger.

## EDGAR ALLAN POE (Page 73)

Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19, 1809, in Boston, where his parents, both actors, were then playing. Two years later the boy, suddenly left an orphan, was adopted by Mr. John Allan, a merchant of Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Allan proved to be an over-indulgent father; he placed his protégé for five years in an English school, then in an Academy in Richmond, and

finally in the University of Virginia, where drinking, gambling, and bad companions soon led to his removal. In 1830 Poe entered West Point, but was shortly afterward tried by court-martial for irregular conduct, and summarily expelled. In the same year he published a remarkable volume of poems, containing much of his best verse.

Poe's first successful attempt at Short Story writing was made in 1833, when he won a prize of one hundred dollars for his *Manuscript Found in a Bottle*. Mr. Allan died in 1834, without leaving any provision for his wayward foster son, and the young man henceforth took up literature as a serious calling. As editor of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, he gained a reputation for clever writing and scathing criticism, often, however, contemptuous and supercilious. In 1836 he married his cousin, Virginia Clemm.

Poe's career from this date until his death is a record of brilliant but intermittent journalistic work in several Eastern cities, and of regular and degrading dissipation which often lost him good positions and sometimes left him in poverty and misery. *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, published in 1839, is the volume which contains his best Short Stories. The death of his wife in January, 1847, left him broken and hysterical; he became almost a hopeless drunkard, and died wretchedly in a Baltimore hospital on October 7, 1849.

Poe's life was a genuine spiritual tragedy. Handsome, gifted, proud, but with an undeveloped moral sense, he possessed little power of self-control, and no capacity for facing misfortune. Despite his fine genius and his lofty artistic aims, he allowed himself too often to be dominated by his passions until his will was partially enfeebled and his body too weak to resist temptation. Morally, he never grew to the full measure of a man.

As an author, Poe was, above all, a master of technique. His intense but morbid imagination lent to all his work animation and vigor; yet at the same time he managed to exercise the necessary self-restraint and to allow his shrewd intellect to govern the outbursts of his fancy. He labored steadily and conscientiously

until he became a fastidious artist. This unusual combination of vivid imagination with sustained and subtle reasoning ability is responsible for much of the unquestioned excellence of his prose and poetry.

It may justly be maintained that Poe is the father of the Short Story as we know it at its best to-day. The structure of his tales, with all its artificiality, is well-nigh perfect. Asserting that the aim of the Short Story should be "a certain unique or *single* effect," he concentrated his attention on the climax, and utilized his every incident, indeed almost his every word, for the emphasizing of that end. He thus made himself a master-craftsman, permitting no diversion, no digression, to turn him from his artistic purpose, and fusing plot, atmosphere, and style into essential harmony. He had discovered, long before Rudyard Kipling, the value of the specific word, and through its use he achieved some remarkably realistic results.

Poe's subject-matter, it is true, is usually abnormal, occasionally decidedly unpleasant. It is hard to feel sympathy with the creator of such a grimly gruesome tale as *Berenice;* at the same time it is impossible to withhold our admiration for this story considered solely as a triumph of technique. Poe, moreover, lacked humor, and he had little of the grace and charm of Irving and Hawthorne. These defects, however, should not be allowed to obscure his commanding position as an innovator, and his far-reaching influence on those who followed him in the same field. America has had saner, more healthful writers, but no other so original and so spectacular.

### The Cask of Amontillado

*The Cask of Amontillado* was first published in *Godey's Magazine* for November, 1846, at a time when the death of Poe's wife was imminent. Despite its unpleasant atmosphere of hardness and cruelty, it illustrates at their best some qualities of Poe's manner and method. From the first mention of the word "revenge" the tale moves surely and inevitably towards the catas-

trophe. It opens without an introduction; Hawthorne might have spent a page on the character of Fortunato and the nature of the "thousand injuries," but these details are aside from Poe's purpose. The author carefully abstains from comment; he presents his narrative with consummate art, and then leaves it to the judgment of the reader. Nothing in the structure is spontaneous; everything is calculated, even artificial. The personality of the writer never intrudes upon the narrative. He remains cold and indifferent.

**73,** 1. **The true virtuoso spirit.** The true spirit of the artist.

**74,** 1. **Amontillado.** A dry, light-colored Sherry wine.

**75,** 1. **Roquelaure.** A long cloak reaching to, or just below, the knee. It was named after the Duc de Roquelaure, a French nobleman of the period of Louis XIV.

2. **Palazzo.** Palace.

**76,** 1. **Catacombs of the Montresors.** The burial vaults of the Montresor family, to which the speaker belongs.

**77,** 1. **D'or.** Of gold, or of yellow color. A **serpent rampant** is a serpent raised on its tail.

2. **Nemo me impune lacessit.** No one attacks me with impunity.

**82,** 1. **In pace requiescat.** May he rest in peace!

## CHARLES DICKENS (Page 83)

Charles Dickens was born at Portsea near Portsmouth, England, in 1813, his father being a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. His early life was full of poverty and hardship: at one period, when the elder Dickens was arrested for debt, the boy was forced to live with him in Marshalsea prison; and later, when he was only ten years old, he was set to work in a blacking factory. When the family finances were less straitened, he found it possible to study in a lawyer's office, and afterwards he learned to be a parliamentary reporter.

The publication of *Sketches by Boz* in 1836 gave him some standing as a writer; and when the famous *Pickwick Papers* appeared in monthly parts during 1837–1839, his reputation was assured. He soon became a notable public character, editing magazines, producing novels at frequent intervals, and delivering semi-dramatic readings from his books. In 1841, he went to America, where he was given an enthusiastic reception; but the publication of *American Notes* in 1842 and *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1843, in which he commented caustically on some crude features of American life, made him temporarily unpopular in this country.

Of the greater novels, *Dombey and Son* came out in 1848, *David Copperfield* in 1849–50, *Bleak House* in 1852–53, *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1859, and *Great Expectations* in 1860–61. In 1856 he bought a home at Gadshill in Kent, which in 1860 became his permanent home. A lecture tour to America in 1867 proved to be highly profitable as a business venture; but the strain was too great for a constitution already undermined by overwork, and he died on June 8, 1870.

Dickens is distinguished as a novelist because of his power and versatility of characterization, his rich and buoyant humor combined with affecting pathos, and his elaborate plots, covering in some books many phases and classes of society. His defects—his tendency towards exaggeration and caricature, his excessive sentimentality, and his carelessness in style—are obvious enough; but his was a prodigal nature, and his work has accordingly both conspicuous virtues and conspicuous blemishes.

With his breadth of conception, his largeness of view, and his impatience of technical restraint, Dickens, like Scott, and for almost the same reasons, was hardly fitted for writing Short Stories. He did, it is true, try his hand at many brief tales; but these are, for the most part, simply condensed novels, containing many characters and not a few irrelevant episodes. The *Christmas Books*, for instance, were made as short as they are primarily because of some necessities of publication. In the case of *The Signal-Man*, however, he did succeed in building almost a perfect specimen of the modern Short Story.

### The Signal-Man

*The Signal-Man*, which appeared as the second of two ghost stories printed in 1866, is practically faultless in technique. The abrupt and startling introduction furnishes a suggestion of mystery which is maintained skillfully until the climax; and the note of comment at the end is not too long to destroy the interest of the conclusion. Dickens may, in this case, have profited somewhat by the example of Poe: at any rate he for once aims his plot at a single definite dénouement, restricts his details carefully to the point at issue, and introduces no persons or incidents not essential to the unity of his impression. The student should notice the effective repetition of the key-phrase, "Halloa! Below there!"

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (Page 103)

Robert Louis Stevenson was born on November 13, 1850, in Edinburgh, the only son of Thomas Stevenson, a well-known engineer and lighthouse builder. Originally destined to pursue his father's calling, he determined later to study law, and after the necessary preparation he was admitted to the bar in 1875. His tastes, however, being entirely literary, legal practice never interested him; indeed as early as 1871 he had begun to contribute articles to various periodicals. Soon, forsaking his profession without any reluctance, he devoted himself to writing, and spent three years in travel and residence abroad, meeting with some delightful adventures afterwards embodied in *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey* (1879). *A Lodging for the Night*, his first story, published in *Temple Bar* for October, 1877, was followed by *Will o' the Mill* and *The Sire de Malétroit's Door* in the next year, with the result that his name came to be known among discriminating readers.

In 1879, going as a steerage passenger to America, he crossed the continent in an emigrant train to California, where he married an American lady, Mrs. Osbourne, whom he had already

met in France. After some painful experiences in the pioneer country, the two returned to England in 1880, and Stevenson entered upon the most productive period of his literary career. Despite long-continued painful illnesses, he set himself bravely to work and, handicapped though he was, managed to write *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), *Treasure Island* (1882), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and *Kidnapped* (1886), as well as other collections of essays and tales.

In 1887, after the death of his father, Stevenson, hoping to benefit his health, sailed again for America, and spent that winter at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks. In the following year he took a yachting trip to the South Sea Islands, and finally, pleased with the climate and the people, determined to settle permanently in Samoa. There he died suddenly on December 3, 1894.

Stevenson was a man of many-sided character and of great personal charm. Unconventional in his dress, in his manners, in his attitude towards life, he drew friends to himself through his very originality. His nature was curiously buoyant and boyish, and his mind and heart were always open to impressions. His optimism was habitual, and no infirmity or disaster could daunt his cheerful spirit.

As a writer, his most noticeable traits are versatility and marvellous technical power. In several diverse branches of literature, including poetry, the essay, the novel, the critical article, the familiar letter, and the Short Story, he won unusual distinction. This fact in itself is enough to stamp him as a genius beyond the ordinary. Moreover, through painstaking experiment and study, he acquired a mastery of literary form and method. All Stevenson's art was consciously directed towards definite ends; but it is art of a subtle and elusive sort, so concealed that the reader forgets to wonder at the mechanism. Furthermore he made himself a really brilliant style, flexible, musical, and lucid. Purely as a craftsman, he has few equals in English.

Stevenson was probably the first British writer to employ deliberately the method of Short Story composition laid down by

Poe. With his sense of form and his delight in perfect finish, it was natural that he should be led to utilize a literary type so susceptible of good workmanship. He was, moreover, a born spinner of yarns—the Samoan natives called him "Tusitala," the Teller of Tales—and, bringing also to the task a sense of proportion, a command of structure, and a style almost impeccable, he was able to advance the Short Story to a high point of perfection. "Stevenson," says Professor H. C. Canby, "is the great polisher of the short story. He finally elevates modern narrative above the suspicion of triviality." His plots, too, are neither morbid, like some of Poe's, nor exaggerated, like many of Bret Harte's; his delicate yet sane imagination never led him beyond the borders of good taste. His tales are harmonious in their nice adjustment of means to ends, of style to plot and atmosphere. Certainly no narrative writer has ever impressed readers so convincingly with the feeling of his mastery over his material and his method.

### The Sire de Malétroit's Door

*The Sire de Malétroit's Door* appeared first in *Temple Bar* for January, 1878. In a letter to Sidney Colvin, written from Edinburgh in August, 1877, Stevenson says of it: "A true novel, in the old sense; all unities preserved moreover, if that's anything, and I believe with some little merits." The tale itself, with its exquisite bits of description, its keen portrayal of character, and its picture of the change in Blanche's mind, is admirably conceived and still more admirably executed. The conclusion especially is absolute perfection.

The story has a French medieval setting. The date, September, 1429, was during the English war with France, shortly after the raising of the siege of Orleans by Joan of Arc. The Burgundians were allied with the French, and Denis, a Frenchman, even with a safe-conduct, was among his enemies.

**111, 1. Leonardo's women.** Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1512) was an Italian painter famous for his portraits of women. One

of the best of these was the well-known "Mona Lisa," which was stolen from the Louvre Gallery in Paris in 1911 and recovered two years later.

**112, 1. Damoiseau.** Young gentleman.

**121, 1. Salle.** Hall.

**128, 1. Fiefs.** Lands tributary to the family estate.

**131, 1. Steadings.** Barns or stables.

## FRANÇOIS COPPÉE (Page 133)

François Coppée was born on January 26, 1842, in Paris. His education was hampered by his feeble health and by the fact that he was obliged, after his father's death, to take the latter's position as clerk in the War Office. While struggling to support his mother and sister, he spent his evenings in libraries, and soon became a member of the "Parnassus" group of writers, by whom his talent was at once recognized. His first published volume, *Le Reliquaire*, appeared in 1866. In 1869 he won a well-deserved success with his one-act play in verse, *Le Passant*, in which Sara Bernhardt took a leading part. The remainder of his life was full of honors. Napoleon III gave him a position in the Library of the Luxembourg. He was admitted to the French Academy in 1884, and was made a Commander of the Legion of Honor in 1888.

Meanwhile he had produced many volumes of verse, and had distinguished himself especially as "the poet of humble life." His first story in prose, *Une Idylle pendant le Siege*, was so successful that he followed it with many others. Towards the end of his life, Coppée was implicated in the notorious Dreyfus affair, but not to his discredit. He died on May 23, 1908.

As an author, Coppée concerned himself chiefly with elemental emotions among people of the lower classes. His chief faults are a tendency to sentimentality and an over-emphasis on triviality. His so-called Short Stories are often little more than sketches; but though they have not the perfect structure of Maupassant's

work, they are filled with feeling and have an atmosphere which is exceedingly affecting.

### The Substitute

*The Substitute*, published in 1883 as *Le Remplaçant*, is undoubtedly Coppée's most powerful Short Story. It is a tragic portrayal of unexpected self-sacrifice on the part of a confirmed criminal. Structurally it is admirably done: every incident in the long career of Lecture is related with an eye on the climax, so that, almost without realizing it, the reader has his sympathy excited for the unfortunate victim of heredity and circumstances. Thus, although the conclusion seems, for the moment, unexpected, a little reflection on the earlier details shows that Coppée has carefully prepared the way for the remarkable act of moral heroism. The student will find it profitable to examine the methods by which this is accomplished.

**133,** 1. **Ten centimes, two sous.** A sum equal to two cents in American money.

2. **Sergeant-de-ville.** Constable.

3. **Crimea.** The Crimean War (1853–56) between England and France on the one hand, and Russia on the other.

**136, 1. The mysterious portfolios of the Rue de Jerusalem.** It was in the Rue de Jerusalem that the office of the Minister of Police was located.

**137,** 1. **Fence.** A receiver of stolen goods.

2. **Toulon.** A city and naval station on the Mediterranean in the south of France, where convicts were quartered at hard labor.

## HENRY CUYLER BUNNER (Page 147)

Henry Cuyler Bunner was born in 1855 and died in 1896. For many years he was the editor of the American comic weekly, *Puck*, in the pages of which much of his work first appeared.

Bunner was primarily a journalist, but a journalist of the highest type. He had a happy faculty of seizing on the humorous and striking features of a story, and reproducing it with fine artistic effect. What he most delighted in was a sharp, unexpected turn of events at the end of the tale. His Short Stories, the best of which are contained in *Short Sixes* (1891), *More Short Sixes* (1893), and *Love in Old Clothes* (1896), have grace, ease, and a certain unity of form, though they are by no means faultless from a technical point of view.

### The Cumbersome Horse

*The Cumbersome Horse* is the first story in *More Short Sixes* published by Bunner in 1894. It is a fine example of the humorous tale with a surprise plot. The unexpected turn at the end is a real stroke of genius. The student will notice that the tale itself is given an added interest through the little strokes which sketch the character of the credulous Mr. Brimmington.

## O. HENRY (Page 163)

The nom-de-plume of O. Henry has become almost as familiar to readers of our own day as that of Mark Twain to those of an earlier generation. His real name was William Sidney Porter. He was born in Greenboro, North Carolina, at the close of the Civil War, but moved in his boyhood to a cattle ranch in Texas, where he later became a newspaper editor. A love of adventure drove him to Central America, but he soon returned to New Orleans and, taking the pseudonym of O. Henry, began contributing to magazines. In 1902 he moved to New York, where he died on June 5, 1910.

Practically all of O. Henry's work was done in Short Stories and sketches. Of these he published many volumes, among the best of which are *The Four Million*, *Heart of the West*, *The Voice of the City*, and *Whirligigs*. His stories are extraordinarily com-

pact, full of slang and picturesque language, and rich in striking situations. Like Bunner, he was fond of giving a sudden and unexpected turn to his conclusion. He had a wide knowledge of life, especially among the lower classes of New York City, and his instinctive sympathy with these people enabled him to reproduce admirably the humor and tragedy of their existence.

### A Chaparral Christmas Gift

*A Chaparral Christmas Gift* is included in the volume called *Whirligigs* (1910). The sharp abrupt introduction, the unexpected turns of language, the rapid direct action, the sudden tragic conclusion—all these illustrate the fine quality of O. Henry's best work. Structurally the story can hardly be improved. The method of Poe has here been turned to new uses; and its effectiveness can hardly be questioned.

**163, 1. Chaparral.** A chaparral is, in western parlance, a thicket of low evergreen oaks. The word is used here to describe a district in Arizona, near the Mexican border.

## GUY DE MAUPASSANT (Page 171)

Guy de Maupassant was born on August 5, 1850, at the Chateau of Miromesnil in France. As a boy, he was remarkable chiefly because of his proficiency in athletic sports. Arrived at manhood, he entered the Marine Office, and later became a clerk under the Board of Public Instruction. At the house of Gustave Flaubert, who was an old family friend, Maupassant came in touch with many modern authors among them Daudet, Tourgenieff, Mendes, and Zola. Under Flaubert's tutelage, the young man served an apprenticeship for seven years, writing copiously but burning most of his production, and mastering the principles of style and structure. His first volume of poems, *Des Vers*, came out in 1880. His *Boule-de-Suif*, a

Short Story contributed to a collection by eminent French authors, made him famous, and for some years he published volume after volume of tales, as well as an occasional novel. About 1886 the first symptoms of madness began to show themselves, and his career practically closed in 1890. He became addicted to drugs and took an abnormal amount of physical exercise, with the result that he grew misanthropic and attempted suicide in 1892. He died insane on July 6, 1893.

Maupassant was primarily an observer of life. His stories are almost photographic reproductions of episodes and incidents which he had actually seen. On these matters he made no comment; to good and to bad he was alike indifferent; his one object was to transcribe with truth and accuracy. As an instrument in this work he had acquired a brilliant style, simple and strong, without a single superfluous word or phrase. "To have color and be sober with it" was his ideal of writing. Of his two hundred or more Short Stories, some are of a trivial and unimportant character; but the majority are masterpieces. Like Stevenson, whose almost exact contemporary he was, he gave to the Short Story finish and polish; but his cold cynicism is just the reverse of Stevenson's deeply moral outlook on existence.

### That Costly Ride

Thirteen of Maupassant's stories have become widely known in English through their inclusion in a volume called *The Odd Number*, which, perhaps, contains most of Maupassant's finest work. *That Costly Ride* is less familiar to readers than the other stories of Maupassant, and possibly somewhat less powerful. It illustrates, however, the writer's entirely impersonal method of narration. The incident has both its tragic and its comic sides; but on these the author has nothing to say. He marshals the facts, taking care to concentrate attention on the climax, and leaves all the comment to the reader. With the characters Maupassant has no sympathy. He is susceptible neither to the pathos nor to the tragedy of the closing situation. The result is art, but art cold, unemotional, and dispassionate.

## KENNETH GRAHAME (Page 190)

Kenneth Grahame is an English writer, born in 1859, who has made a well-deserved reputation as an author of stories for children. Among Mr. Grahame's best known books are *The Golden Age* (1895), *Dream Days* (1898), and *The Wind in the Willows* (1908). Perhaps his finest characteristic is his power of seizing upon the point of view of boys and girls, and coloring it with his own imagination. In fact most of his tales make delightful reading for older people, for his work is highly original, the product of a careful and fastidious literary artist.

### The Blue Room

*The Blue Room* forms a chapter in Mr. Grahame's *The Golden Age*, which is commonly considered the most successful of his books. The story is a complete unit in itself, dealing with a single incident and carrying that to a definite conclusion.

**191,** 1. **Pince-nez.** Eyeglasses kept on the nose by a spring.

**192,** 1. **David Cox.** A Scotch landscape painter.

**195,** 1. **Fagged.** A reference to the system of "fagging" in the English schools, in which the younger boys are supposed to do errands for the older ones.

2. **Single-stick.** A game of fencing with cudgels, the object being to rap the opponent's head.

3. **Guy Fawkes.** A Yorkshire soldier of fortune who, in 1604, planned to blow up the House of Lords and establish a Catholic government in England. His plot, however, was discovered and he himself was put to death. For years it was the custom in England to celebrate the fifth of November as Guy Fawkes Day.

4. **True Elizabethans.** A reference to the drama during the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the plays were presented in a crude theater, without scenery, lighting, or drop curtains.

**196,** 1. **Histrionic.** Theatrical.

## JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE (Page 182)

James Matthew Barrie, one of the best-beloved of contemporary novelists and dramatists, was born on May 9, 1860, in Kirriemuir, Scotland. He was educated at Dumfries Academy, and later at Edinburgh University. Mr. Barrie has devoted himself entirely to literature, and he is the author of many volumes of novels and sketches dealing with Scotch life and people. Among his most successful books are *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888), *A Window in Thrums* (1889), *My Lady Nicotine* (1890), *The Little Minister* (1891), and *Sentimental Tommy* (1896). In recent years Mr. Barrie has written many popular plays, among them being *Peter Pan* (1904), *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire* (1905), and *What Every Woman Knows* (1908).

Mr. Barrie's work is distinguished by a graceful and fluent style, an intimate charm of expression, and a rich vein of humor. His mind delights in the fanciful and the imaginative, as well as in the grotesquely realistic. He has given some admirable sketches of Scottish peasants and laboring people. There are few contemporary writers who are more fascinating and delightful.

### How Gavin Birse Put it to Mag Lownie

This short sketch is included in Mr. Barrie's *A Window in Thrums* as Chapter XV of that collection. In reality, however, it is complete in itself, although it resembles in many respects the Anecdote rather than the Short Story. The sharp turn at the end gives the story an irresistibly humorous touch.

**182, 1. Dulseman.** A peddler of dulse, a kind of edible seaweed.
**184, 1. Speir.** To ask or inquire.
2. **Wifie.** Housewife or boarding-house keeper.
**185, 1. Pirn.** A quill or reed on which thread or yarn is wound.
2. **'At wisna marrows.** That were not mates.

## RUDYARD KIPLING (Page 202)

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, probably the greatest contemporary master of the Short Story, was born in 1865 in India, but received his education largely in England, his father's home. He began his literary career as a journalist in India by publishing occasional bits of verse in the colonial papers, his earliest successful book, *Departmental Ditties*, appearing in 1886. Following this came volume after volume of Short Stories and poetry, among them being *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Soldiers Three*, and *The Phantom Rickshaw*, all printed in 1888. His first long novel, *The Light that Failed*, was published in 1891. Since that date books have come from his pen at frequent intervals, including *The Jungle Books*, *Stalky and Co.*, and *Kim*, besides others of less importance. Mr. Kipling has been an extensive traveler, and has lived in various quarters of the globe, including India, America, and England. His works have been issued as classics in many editions, and his wide popularity as an author is unquestioned.

Mr. Kipling has been a prolific and indefatigable writer of Short Stories. Commencing as the annalist of a frontier community, he seized upon the picturesque aspects of the life around him with the instinct of a born journalist, and transmuted slight incidents into genuine tales of "local color." He continued his success in other fields, showing a surprising versatility and an astonishing knowledge of many different subjects. In *The Brushwood Boy* (1896) and *They* (1904) he has produced what Professor Canby calls "the noblest examples of the modern Short Story."

Mr. Kipling's Short Stories are distinguished chiefly by freshness, compression, and power. They treat unhackneyed themes in a highly original way, and although sometimes faulty in taste and sensational in manner, they are never feeble or uninteresting. He possesses the rare ability of concentrating the reader's attention on the significant features of an episode. He has learned,

moreover, the effectiveness of the specific word in making a tale dramatic and realistic. As a craftsman, he is master of the technical details of his art.

## Wee Willie Winkie

*Wee Willie Winkie* first appeared in 1888 in a volume entitled *Wee Willie Winkie and other Child Stories*. The story lacks perhaps the force and intensity of many Kipling tales, but it illustrates Kipling's method of utilizing the interesting details of the army life around him in India; moreover, as an anecdote of childhood, it is remarkable in its verisimilitude. Structurally it is representative of the author's best work.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

More elaborate discussions of the principles of Short Story writing will be found in the following authoritative books:

Matthews, Brander. *The Philosophy of the Short Story;* New York, 1901.

Albright. *The Short-Story, Its Principles and Structure.*

Esenwein, J. B. *Writing the Short Story.*

Canby, H. S. *The Short Story in English.*

Perry, Bliss. *A Study of Prose Fiction.*

There are, of course, many collections to which the student may be referred for further reading. A few of the best are here noted.

Baldwin, C. S. *American Short Stories.*

Dawson. *The World's Famous Short Stories.*

Irving. *The Sketch-Book.*
*Tales of a Traveler.*

Poe. *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.*

Hawthorne. *Twice-Told Tales.*
*Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Bret Harte. *The Luck of Roaring Camp.*

Kipling. *Plain Tales from the Hills.*
*Soldiers Three.*

Maupassant. *The Odd Number.*

Coppée. *Ten Tales.*

Henry, O. *The Four Million.*
*Sixes and Sevens.*

Freeman, Mary E. Wilkins. *A New England Nun.*

Cable, G. W. *Old Creole Days.*

Comer, C. *Preliminaries.*

Hardy, Thomas. *Wessex Tales.*

# EXERCISES FOR STUDY AND COMPOSITION

1. Select any Short Story from a reputable current magazine and criticise its technique, taking into consideration the introduction, the order of incidents, the climax, and the harmony of plot, style, and atmosphere.

2. Compare the Short Story you have selected with Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale.*

3. Look over the titles of the Short Stories in this volume, and comment on their effectiveness. In your criticism fitness, attractiveness, and brevity should be considered. Select from the table of contents of any modern magazine the Short Story titles which interest you, and state, if you can, the reasons for this interest.

4. Compare the various methods of introduction used in the Short Stories in this collection. Read Stevenson's letter to W. E. Henley, October, 1884 (*Letters,* I, 384), which furnishes some interesting suggestions as to how romances should begin.

5. Write a formal introduction, descriptive or expository in character.

6. Write a conversational introduction, which will convey all the necessary preliminary information to the reader.

7. Write a character sketch of some friend or acquaintance, taking care to select only details which are unusual and peculiar to the person described.

8. Write a Short Story which will portray the same character under the influence of strong emotion.

9. Write a Short Story based on some vacation experience, narrating the events in the exact chronological order of their occurrence. Rewrite the same story, concentrating the attention on the climax, and omitting all the material which does not bear

directly on the main incident. Contrast the effect of the two stories.

10. Write a Short Story dealing with some dramatic incident in a football or baseball game you have seen.

11. Write a story dealing with the thrilling moment in a race.

12. Cut from a newspaper a humorous short anecdote, and amplify it into a longer narrative.

13. Write a Short Story of unexplained mystery, taking as a model Dickens's *The Signal-Man.*

14. Write a Short Story of explained mystery.

15. After reading carefully Poe's *The Purloined Letter* or any one of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, write a detective story, taking care to make your solution entirely plausible.

16. Write a Short Story of "local color," dealing with a locality with which you are thoroughly familiar. Be careful to reproduce accurately any peculiarities of dress, habits, or manners which you may have observed.

17. Write a Short Story dealing with some unexpected act of heroism in a man of previously bad reputation. Coppée's *The Substitute* may be consulted as a model.

18. Write a Short Story in the first person, describing an interesting and unusual experience of your own. Write exactly the same story in the third person. Compare the effect of the two methods.

19. The teacher should read to the class a part of some Short Story with an unexpected conclusion, and then ask the pupils to make an ending of their own.

20. Write a Short Story presented entirely in dialogue after the introduction of the two main characters.

21. Write a Short Story dealing with some well-known historical event and introducing some famous historical figures.

22. Write a Short Story of school or college life. Kipling's *Stalky and Co.* and Owen Johnson's Lawrenceville stories will furnish models.

23. Cut from the newspaper a brief clipping about some interesting incident, and develop it into a Short Story.

C0-BYJ-217